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TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The Language Educator

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AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2014 | VOLUME 9 | ISSUE 4



FOCUS TOPIC

Taking Language Beyond the Classroom

- Travel and Study Abroad
- Service Learning
- Social Media and Technology
- Intercultural Exchange
- Classroom Without Walls
- School-to-School Partnerships
- Expeditionary Learning

UPCOMING FOCUS TOPIC

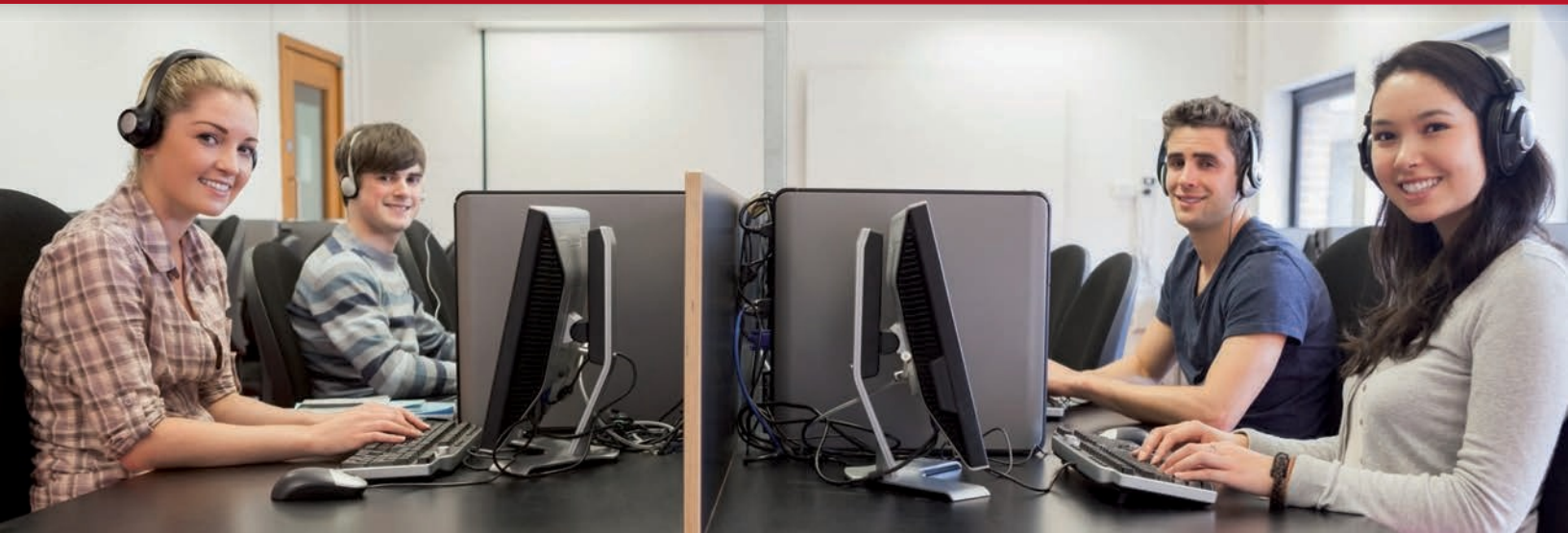
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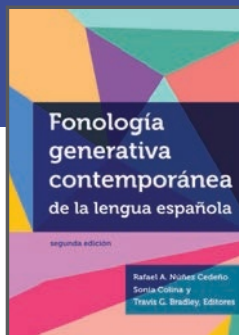


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Rafael A. Núñez Cedeño, Sonia Colina, and Travis G. Bradley, Editors

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—Juana Gil, Head of the Phonetics Laboratory, Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), Madrid, Spain

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Georgetown Studies in Spanish Linguistics series



Hoda Barakat's *Sayyidi wa Habibi*

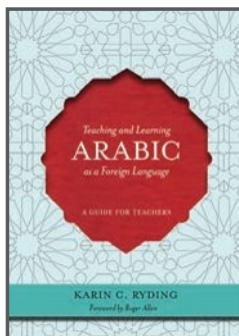
The Authorized Abridged Edition for Students of Arabic

Laila Familiar, Editor

"If this book had only contained the abridged novel *Sayyidi wa Habibi* it would have represented that rare literary text that one could teach to students of Arabic at the advanced low level. With all of the additional materials (cultural and historical) and exercises (to be done before, during, and after reading the text itself), it becomes an indispensable tool for Arabic instructors who want to expose their students to literature in their first few years of study."

—Christopher Stone, associate professor of Arabic, Department of Classical and Oriental Studies, Hunter College

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A Guide for Teachers

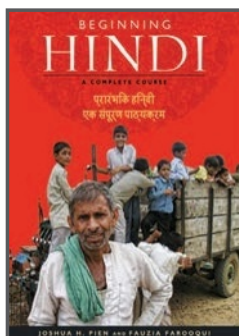
Karin C. Ryding

Foreword by Roger Allen

"This book is more than a guide; it is a pioneering synthesis of the leading research on the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language (TAFL). . . . And it is written in an engaging style that will excite the profession. Karin Ryding has produced a work of great merit which will mark the birth of TAFL as a self-conscious field of study and application. Future generations of students, teachers, and scholars will have a lot to thank her for."

—Yasir Suleiman, professor of modern Arabic studies, Cambridge University

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Beginning Hindi

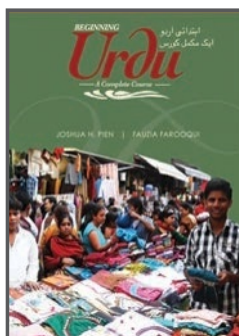
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Joshua H. Pien and Fauzia Farooqui

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A Complete Course

Joshua H. Pien and Fauzia Farooqui

"[A] welcome addition to the study of South Asian languages. I commend this book for its accuracy, thoroughness, and usefulness. Going through the book, one can clearly see that the authors have a meticulous understanding of language pedagogy principles and a knack of presenting materials with great sensitivity to learners' needs. One feels a fresh breeze in the selection of content and methodology here."

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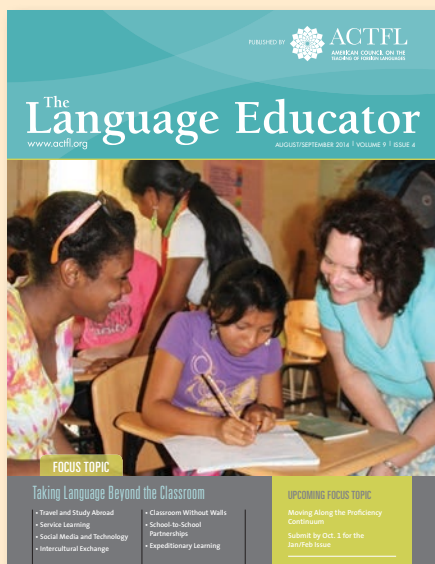
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ON THE COVER:

2014 ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year Linda Egnatz takes her students on a spring break trip every year to use their language skills in other communities. This year, she took her students to Panama and here they are shown visiting an Embera village.

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The Language Educator



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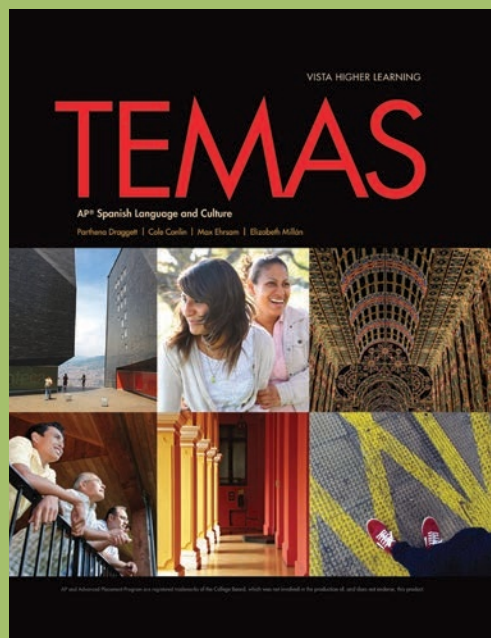
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YOUR RESOURCE FOR RESEARCH: Don't Miss the Fall Issue of *Foreign Language Annals*

New Submission Process

Foreign Language Annals has now transitioned to a new submission system through ScholarOne. Learn more about the journal at www.actfl.org/publications/all/foreign-language-annals. The link to submit a paper through the new system is available at mc.manuscriptcentral.com/flajournal.

When the next issue of ACTFL's journal arrives in September, be sure to check out the following articles:

Empirical Validation of Listening Proficiency Guidelines

Troy Cox & Ray Clifford describe a criterion-referenced test development process for operationalizing, and thus validating, the listening proficiency scales that are described in the ACTFL Listening Proficiency guidelines. They report data in seven languages that confirm that items can be created to distinguish among candidates with differing levels of listening proficiency.

Teaching and Testing L2 Spanish Listening Using Scripted Versus Unscripted Texts

Elvis Wagner & Paul Toth point out that, even after years of study, many L2 learners have difficulty comprehending the real-world language spoken by proficient speakers. This study compared learners' performance on a listening comprehension test using scripted versus unscripted spoken texts and offers recommendations for supporting students' developing listening proficiency.

Exploring Oral Proficiency Profiles of Heritage Speakers of Russian and Spanish

Elvira Swender, Cynthia Martin, Mildred Rivera-Martinez, & Olga Kagan explored the linguistic profiles of heritage speakers of Russian and Spanish in order to better understand the factors that contribute to their speaking proficiency, their linguistic strengths and weaknesses within certain proficiency ranges, and the language features that prevented them from being rated at the next higher level.

The Role of the Colloquial Varieties in the Acquisition of the Standard Variety: The Case of Arabic Heritage Speakers

Abdulkafi Albirini investigated whether heritage speakers of colloquial varieties of Arabic

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who enroll in college-level elementary Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) classes have an advantage over their L2 learner counterparts, whether any potential advantage carries on to a later stage of their Arabic learning, and the role of positive or negative transfer from the colloquial variety in the acquisition of MSA in a formal setting.

Variables Affecting L2 Gains During Study Abroad

Wendy Baker-Smemoe, Dan Dewey, Jennifer Bown, & Rob Martinsen examined pre- and post-program OPI scores for 102 native English speakers who participated in study abroad programs in six countries. Data show that most students achieved L2 gains, but that cultural sensitivity and social networks were the strongest predictors of gains in oral proficiency.

Conversational Patterns of Homestay Hosts and Study Abroad Students

Michael Pryde analyzed data from 37 conversations that were collected over a 1-year study abroad homestay program to better understand general patterns of language use. In particular, positive and negative evaluative moves and display questions on the part of the hosts were found to restrict conversation and established conversational patterns that were difficult to break during the study abroad period.

Comparing Teachers' Judgments of Learners' Speech in Chinese as a Foreign Language

Jane Orton compared judgments of students' oral presentations rendered by L1 Chinese teachers in China, L1 Chinese teachers in Australia, and L2 Chinese teachers in Australia. Results showed considerable common ground on which to create international norms for teaching Chinese as an L2. However, the data also revealed strong conceptual differences among L1 and L2 teachers, confirming the need for dialogue among members of the international Chinese language teaching community.

The Impact of the Oral Proficiency Interview on One Foreign Language Teacher Education Program

Scott Kissau conducted a case study analysis of a recently implemented OPI requirement as part of one university's teacher licensure program. The study confirms earlier research on proficiency levels of language teacher candidates and suggests that the requirement neither negatively affected program enrollment, nor was negatively perceived by candidates. Strategies to better prepare candidates to successfully complete the OPI are discussed.

The Undergraduate Spanish Major Curriculum: Realities and Faculty Perceptions

Tammy Hertel & Abby Dings report the results of a survey that focused on the Spanish curriculum at 66 postsecondary institutions. Results indicate that literature courses continue to play a significant role at the core of the curriculum, although the MLA report has had some influence in fueling curriculum reform. Findings suggest that continuing professional development and graduate student education are needed.

President's Message

PLCs—Making Connections Among Language Educators

The start of each academic year is a time of excitement as we begin anew with our students and colleagues. It is a period of great anticipation as we consider which new ideas and strategies we can use in our classes that will engage and inspire our learners.

One of the great benefits of being a language educator is that we are all members of professional learning communities (PLCs), in which we can share experiences and learn from one another. As we begin this academic year, I encourage you to invite a colleague in world languages who may not currently be a participant in a PLC to join you in an event this year. This might be participation in a state, regional, or national conference, or perhaps a webinar. As members of learning communities, one of our roles is to introduce others to professional opportunities so that they can benefit from these experiences and then hopefully they, too, will become active participants. To this end, ACTFL is offering a new “Invite a Colleague” feature on the registration form for the 2014 ACTFL Annual Convention, which will help encourage participants to involve their fellow educators (see p. 64 for more information).

As educators, we are continually learning and growing as part of our professional life. Our world is moving at such a rapid pace that we must constantly stay abreast of changes that may impact our effectiveness as teachers. Ongoing participation in learning opportunities such as educational conferences and events should be an integral part of our professional growth plan at each stage of our career. This is exactly how we can stay current and advance our knowledge and expertise in the classroom. Additionally, we know that if beginning teachers become involved in professional development during their induction to teaching, they will more likely remain in the classroom for a longer period of time.

Of course, ACTFL is renowned as an outstanding PLC that offers opportunities for educators of all languages and levels to learn about the most current instructional practices, meet experts in the field, and network with colleagues from around the globe. At the convention in San Antonio in November, you will find a wide array of excellent sessions and events designed specifically for beginning language educators and first-time attendees at all stages of their career, including:

- 600+ sessions and workshops focused on innovative teaching and learning including poster sessions, interactive roundtables, and exhibitor workshops
- Career Builder Sessions—a professional strand of 10 sessions designed to prepare and support beginning educators in K–16
- Plenary sessions on the ACTFL Research Priorities Project and framing learning using global competence models
- The World Languages Expo—more than 250 exhibitors offering cutting-edge products, the latest technologies, and the most current publications in our field
- A “Social Media Lounge” where you can network with colleagues online

One of the many wonderful advantages we have as ACTFL members are the myriad ways our PLC provides connections for our students with communities around the globe in which the language they are studying is spoken, thus reinforcing the Communities goal area in our teaching. Language educators have unique opportunities to engage students in real-world experiences through connections with multilingual communities. This can be done via technology and social media networking, as well as through travel and study abroad programs, volunteer opportunities in the local community, and service learning experiences both at home and abroad.

ACTFL webinars are another wonderful way to engage in our PLC, as participants can use these sessions to focus local discussion and exchange of ideas. Each webinar can be the catalyst for a language department or a virtual group to explore topics immediately applicable to language learning. [Learn more at www.actfl.org/webinars.]

Through participation in professional development such as the convention and webinars, as well as other ACTFL membership services, we can find many resources to support the Communities standards, thereby helping our students to become lifelong learners and participants in global communities.



Mary Lynn Redmond
ACTFL President



Access a special video message from ACTFL President Mary Lynn Redmond in *TLE Online* at www.thelanguageeducator.org.

Communities Standards

School and Global Communities: Learners use the language both within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate in their community and the globalized world.

Lifelong Learning: Learners set goals and reflect on their progress in using languages for enjoyment, enrichment, and advancement.

Declining Biodiversity Tied to Language Extinction

Researchers studying linguistic diversity have concluded there is a direct connection between changes in natural environments and the vanishing of indigenous languages. According to *Biocultural Diversity: Threatened Species, Endangered Languages*, a report released in June by researchers Jonathan Loh at the Zoological Society of London and David Harmon at the George Wright Society, the steep declines in both languages and nature have many parallels.

One in four of the world's 7,000 languages are now threatened with extinction, and linguistic diversity is declining as fast as biodiversity—about 30% since 1970, they say.

While around 21% of all mammals, 13% of birds, 15% of reptiles, and 30% of amphibians are threatened, around 400 languages are thought to have become extinct in the same time. The report says that when it comes to endangered languages, Australia and the island of New Guinea deserve particular

attention: “Australia because its indigenous languages are the most highly threatened in the world, and New Guinea because it is the most linguistically diverse place on Earth. Most of the 1,000 or so languages of New Guinea are threatened, but their decline is not as rapid as in Australia where more than 90% are threatened with extinction.”

The full report can be downloaded for free at awsassets.panda.org/downloads/biocultural_report__june_2014.pdf.

Bilingual Brains Age More Slowly

Learning a second language, even in adulthood, may slow the aging process of the human brain, improve problem solving, and boost performance on intelligence tests, according to a recent study published in *Annals of Neurology*, a journal of the American Neurological Association and Child Neurology Society: “Does Bilingualism Influence Cognitive Aging?”

Researchers studied data for more than 800 native English speakers who were given an intelligence test as children and again when participants were in their 70s. Bilingual speakers showed higher scores on intelligence tests, researchers found.

Bilingualism has been recognized to improve cognition and delay dementia in older adults. While prior research has investigated the impact of learning more than one language, ruling out “reverse causality” has proven difficult. The crucial question is whether people improve their cognitive functions through learning new languages or whether those with better baseline cognitive functions are more likely to become bilingual.

“Our study is the first to examine whether learning a second language impacts cognitive performance later in life while controlling for childhood intelligence,” says lead author Thomas Bak from the Centre for Cognitive Aging and Cognitive Epidemiology at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

For the study, researchers relied on data from the Lothian Birth Cohort 1936, comprised of 835 native speakers of English who were born and living in the area of Edinburgh. The participants were given an intelligence test in 1947 at age 11 and retested in their early 70s, between 2008 and 2010. Two hundred and sixty-two participants reported to be able to communicate in at least one language other than English. Of those, 195 learned the second language before age 18 and 65 learned it as adults.

The study showed that those who spoke two or more languages had significantly better cognitive abilities compared to what would be expected from their baseline. The strongest effects were seen in general intelligence and reading. The effects were present in those who acquired their second language late as well as early.

Learn more about this study at tinyurl.com/bilingual-study-2014.

Survey Shows UK Employees Need Language Skills

A majority of 300 firms in the United Kingdom surveyed by the business lobby group CBI said they seek foreign language skills in employees. Some 41% of businesses said knowledge of a foreign language was beneficial, while 28% believed language skills would help to build relations with overseas contacts.

Top languages in demand by employers include French (50%), German (49%), and Spanish (44%), reflecting the involvement between the UK and the European Union countries. Mandarin (31%) and Arabic (23%) were also said to be becoming more important. Others identified Polish (19%), Russian (18%), Cantonese (16%) and Japanese (15%).

The survey suggested that languages were likely to continue to grow in importance “as ambitious firms look to break into new, fast-growing markets.” According to the CBI, however, the UK's education system is failing to produce enough people with foreign language skills to meet the growing need from business.

For more information, download the 2014 CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey from tinyurl.com/2014-cbi-survey.

Spanish Popular on Social Networks

According to a study published by the Instituto Cervantes, 7.8% of Internet users communicate in Spanish, and the language has achieved a growth of 807% between 2000 and 2011. The study says Spanish is the second most used language on Twitter and Facebook, the world's most popular social networks.

After Mandarin Chinese, Spanish is the second largest mother tongue in the world in terms of numbers of speakers, but for demographic reasons the percentage of the world population that speaks Spanish as their native language is increasing, while the proportion of speakers of Chinese and English is dropping.

An article is available (in Spanish) at tinyurl.com/spanish-social-networks.

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TLE SPOTLIGHT ON . . . **Taeko Tashibu**

Taeko Tashibu teaches Japanese at Roosevelt High School in Seattle, WA, where she also serves as National Honor Society advisor and advisor for the Japanese Culture Club. In 2001, Roosevelt honored her as its Inspirational Teacher of the Year. Tashibu is active in professional associations, having served as 1999–2001 President of the Washington Association of Japanese Teachers (WAJT), 2000–2001 President of the Washington Association for Language Teaching (WAFLT), and as Teaching Board Member of the National Council for Japanese Language (NCJL). She received the WAFLT Continued Distinguished Service Award and Teacher of the Year Award, the WAJT Leslie Birkland Leadership Award, and the NCJL Teacher of the Year Award. She was a finalist for the ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year, as she represented the Pacific Northwest Council for Languages (PNCFL) as their Teacher of the Year.

"I believe culture comes alive through language, and therefore language learning opens the door to understanding foreign culture," says Tashibu. "I have created classroom rituals to employ the manners and customs of the Japanese in an authentic way, which enables my students to better learn the language and culture. At the same time, I make sure all students have fun learning. In many ways, it's as if the student is entering a classroom in Japan, not Seattle!"

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Foreign Language Annals Seeks New Managing Editor

ACTFL is currently seeking a Managing Editor for *Foreign Language Annals*, the association's highly respected, peer-reviewed quarterly scholarly journal. **The desired start date for the Managing Editor's term is January 1, 2015.** The journal is dedicated to expanding the awareness and understanding among language education professionals of current research, pedagogy, and challenges facing the profession. It is mailed in March, June, September, and December to more than 12,500 ACTFL members and an additional 1,000 institutional subscribers. More information about the journal can be found in the Publications area at www.actfl.org.

The ACTFL Executive Director appoints the Managing Editor, in consultation with the Editor. The Editor directs the work of the Managing Editor.

The Managing Editor:

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- manages the Scholar One submission system and utilizes the reporting features
- completes other tasks as asked by the Editor
- attends the annual meeting of the Editorial Board at the ACTFL Annual Convention held each year in November

This position offers a modest annual honorarium. Applicants should submit a *curriculum vitae* along with a letter documenting interest no later than **September 1, 2014.** The review of candidate applications will begin after that date and the position will remain open until filled.

Applications should be submitted online at www.actfl.org/publications/all/foreign-language-annals.



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BriefBits

Here we present some language-related articles which appeared in newspapers and online, and were recently featured in ACTFL SmartBrief. To subscribe to this free e-newsletter and get the most up-to-date news sent directly to you via email, go to www.actfl.org/smartbrief.

Delaware Seeks to Boost Language Immersion Programs by 2015

More than 800 students took Spanish and Mandarin Chinese courses this year under Delaware's World Language Immersion Program. The program aims to offer students the opportunity to speak more than one language by fourth grade. The state is seeking to enroll up to 1,500 students in 20 programs by fall 2015.

"More Delaware Students Learning Chinese, Spanish" in *The News Journal*, 5/27/14

Michigan District to Expand Foreign Language Course Selection

Community demand and data from students in the Ann Arbor, MI school district have prompted school officials to add Chinese and Arabic language courses in a number of middle and high schools beginning in the fall. American Sign Language also will be offered at some schools, and officials anticipate that a district elementary school will teach Spanish and Chinese languages.

"Chinese, Arabic to Be Offered at Select Ann Arbor Schools" on *Mlive.com*, 5/22/14

Kentucky Education Board Moves Forward with Universal Foreign Language

High schools in Kentucky soon will begin a review of their foreign language programs under a request by the state board of education. The request is part of the board's move toward universal foreign language instruction. Elementary and middle schools also have been directed to consider language and global competency strategies for students.

"Mandatory Foreign Language on the Horizon" in *The Daily Independent*, 6/5/14

Samsung Introduces New Tablet Designed for Schools

Samsung Electronics America, Inc. recently released the new Galaxy Tab® 4 Education—its first tablet specifically designed to support computing initiatives in K–12 schools. The 10.1" tablet is available now for school districts planning technology initiatives for the 2014–2015 academic year.

Through integration with Google Play for Education, the tablet gives educators access to a wide selection of teacher-approved apps, books, and videos, and a user-friendly purchase order management system is designed to make acquiring content a simple process.

For districts seeking to scale up 1:1 initiatives, an available web-based console enables IT administrators to easily manage and update multiple devices, freeing up resources for tech training and development. The Galaxy Tab 4 Education also includes Near Field Communications (NFC) technology, making it easy for IT to quickly set up a classroom.

Features of the Galaxy Tab 4 Education include:

- A protective case and the use of Corning® Gorilla® Glass for extra durability in the classroom
- A 10.1" WXGA display (1280x800) and a 16:10 aspect ratio for ease of content viewing
- Samsung's MultiWindow® feature that allows users to have two apps open side-by-side
- WiFi 802.11 a/b/g/n support for better connectivity
- Rear- and front-facing cameras so students can easily capture images and collaborate with peers through video web chats
- Up to 10 hours of battery life
- A standard 16GB memory, with a MicroSD Card Slot for up to 64GB of additional storage

Optional accessories that are available to supplement the tablet use include a connected USB keyboard, AllShare Cast for wireless mirroring of content to displays, and charge carts for easy classroom storage.

The Galaxy Tab 4 Education will be compatible with a future upgrade to Samsung School, Samsung's interactive classroom management solution that combines with classroom displays and other technology.

For more information, visit www.samsung.com/education.

Share Your Ware!

The Language Educator would like to hear from you.

If you know of any new language technology, software, or hardware, that you have used or reviewed, please send the information via email to scutshall@actfl.org.

Inclusion of products in "Tech Talk" does not imply endorsement by ACTFL or The Language Educator.

Powerspeak¹²: Foreign Language Learning for Kids

Powerspeak¹², a product of Middlebury Interactive Languages, is a fully accredited series of courses developed specifically to teach children a foreign language. Offered in Spanish, French, Chinese, German, and Latin, the courses are designed to meet the specific needs and requirements of students in Grades 3–12, and are available as independent study or teacher-supported credit courses. The credit courses include ongoing guidance and support from a state-certified world language instructor.

The Powerspeak¹² courses help students develop communicative competence in their target language while building a foundation in grammar and vocabulary with accessible, task-based activities and games, age-appropriate content, and an "advisor" avatar that guides students through new language learning concepts.

Features of Powerspeak¹² include:

- Direct online access to 31 courses ranging from beginner to AP
- Age-appropriate content, games, and culturally relevant activities help students learn by reading, writing, speaking, and listening within a target language
- Integrated award systems keep students engaged and eager to learn
- Game-based lessons, adventure stories, authentic videos and culture
- Reading and listening comprehension activities
- Recording and listening tools
- Oral and written exercises and assessments
- Option to access a certified teacher and earn credit

For more information, visit www.powerspeak.com.

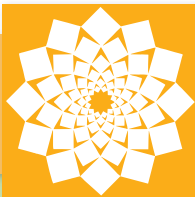
Fluenz Offers Language Learning on Multiple Platforms

Foreign language education developer Fluenz offers multi-level language programs in six languages, including French, German, Italian, Mandarin, Portuguese, and Spanish (Latin America or Spain). Designed with teen and adult learners in mind, Fluenz's language programs are predicated on leveraging English, and the learner's knowledge of English grammar, syntax, and vocabulary, as a launching point to learn a foreign language.

Video tutorials lead students through each lesson, which also feature easy-to-read graphics and interactive activities. Each language offers multiple levels of instruction (2–5, depending on the language) based on the learner's current level of language mastery.

Each Fluenz course includes access to the Fluenz course online, the full course on DVD, audio CDs, MP3s for comprehension practice on the go, flashcards, as well as access to the full course from iPhones and iPods.

For more information, visit www.fluenz.com.



Inside ACTFL

AN UPDATE FROM THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON THE TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Call for Program Reviewers: ACTFL/CAEP Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers (Initial Level)

ACTFL invites individuals to apply to become reviewers for those teacher preparation programs that are seeking national recognition from ACTFL and the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). Program reviewers are trained to examine the reports and data submitted by Educator Preparation Providers. This is a rewarding professional service that offers an opportunity to view and influence national and international teacher education programs. There is no remuneration to reviewers or to ACTFL.

Upon successful completion of a 1-day training workshop, to be held on **Thursday, November 20, 2014**, prior to the ACTFL

Convention, individuals will be assigned by CAEP to a three-person program review team. One member of the team is designated the lead reviewer and is responsible for compiling the program report for submission to ACTFL/CAEP. The entire review is conducted online. No travel is required. Reviewers agree to participate in at least one review per semester.

Who may apply:

- Educators from schools, universities or colleges/departments of education, departments of languages, cultures, and literatures in a variety of institutions. Program reviewers should reflect a range of language, ethnic, and experiential backgrounds.

Term of service:

- 3 years, renewable based on satisfactory performance and update training.

How to apply:

- Find the application online at the ACTFL website: www.actfl.org/files/public/ApplicationForProgramReviewers05.pdf
- Send your abbreviated *curriculum vitae* outlining experience relevant to program review and/or teacher education, and two letters of recommendation that address your ability to make program judgments. Send as email attachment to jshrum@actfl.org.

For further information, contact Judith L. Shrum at jshrum@actfl.org; 540-320-0499.

Writing and Reviewing the ACTFL/CAEP Teacher Preparation Report

Thursday, November 20, 2014, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Presenters: Judith Shrum, Rebecca Fox, Shawn Morrison, Nathan Bond

This workshop will examine the ACTFL/CAEP Report as it is written by faculty members in programs that prepare world language teachers and as it is reviewed by ACTFL reviewers. Participants who are faced with the task of writing their program's report will view the report components in detail, learning what constitutes a successful report leading to national recognition from ACTFL. Participants who are interested in becoming reviewers of reports will learn how to analyze and review a submitted report in order to determine the appropriate recognition decision and provide support to the program. The workshop will first focus on how to write the report (9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.). From 1:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m., the workshop will focus on reviewer education with hands-on work with actual reports. Potential program reviewers will spend all day in the workshop. A box lunch will be provided.

The full-day workshop is open only to those who have applied or plan to apply to be ACTFL/CAEP Program Reviewers.

The morning workshop is open to anyone who wants to learn how to write the ACTFL/CAEP Program Report. [Find the form to sign up for the morning-only workshop online at www.actfl.org/professional-development/actfl-caep.]

Potential reviewers should apply online at the ACTFL website, and then send a CV, and two letters of recommendation as email attachments to Judith Shrum at jshrum@actfl.org. Following a screening process, applicants will be notified of their acceptance into the workshop. Following the workshop, participants will be expected to review at least one program in the fall and spring review cycles. There is no registration fee for this workshop. ACTFL is unable to provide funds for travel, lodging, or meals.

ACTFL Joins Generation Study Abroad Campaign

Generation Study Abroad is a new campaign launched by the Institute of International Education (IIE) earlier this year, which intends to double the number of U.S. students who study abroad to 600,000 by 2019.

ACTFL has joined with IIE, and about 160 colleges and universities, to support the goal. In becoming an association partner, ACTFL, an organization of 12,500 members with approximately half from K-12 and half postsecondary, has committed to a number of supportive actions. Among these are to:

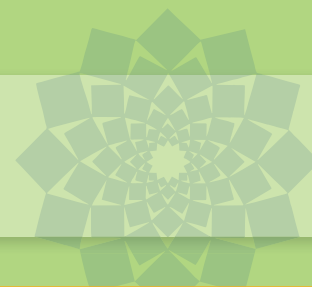
- Include information about the campaign on the ACTFL website and in the *ACTFL Connection*, the ACTFL SmartBrief, *The Language Educator*, and *Foreign Language Annals*
- Feature a Q&A interview in *The Language Educator* with Alan Goodman, CEO of IIE
- Provide ACTFL members with specific guidelines on how to get their institutions to commit to the initiative
- Include Generation Study Abroad as a topic for a session at the ACTFL Annual Convention
- Produce an ACTFL Position Statement on why study abroad is important

IIE has dedicated \$2 million toward the effort and will recruit students from low income and other underrepresented groups, including community college students.

Over the next 5 years, Generation Study Abroad will reach out to educators at all levels and stakeholders in the public and private sectors to encourage purposeful, innovative action to get more Americans to undertake an international experience. Learn more at www.iie.org/Programs/Generation-Study-Abroad.

Teacher Educators: Request Your ACTFL Student Kits Today

Many teacher educators find that getting their students involved in professional organizations early helps in their development as future teachers. If you are a teacher educator, you can receive information packets about the products and services available from ACTFL along with copies of *The Language Educator* and *Foreign Language Annals*, and information regarding the regional conferences. Enclosed with these packets are membership brochures and applications for your students to become members of their professional organization and take advantage of the resources and benefits you enjoy. Student membership in ACTFL is available for \$29 a year and requires a letter verifying student status. Don't miss out on this important opportunity for your students! To request these packets, please send an email containing your name, address, and number of packets needed to membership@actfl.org or call (703) 894-2900. Please allow four weeks for processing and delivery.



Mark Your Calendar Now for Future ACTFL Conventions

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| November 21–23, 2014 | Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center and Grand Hyatt San Antonio Hotel, San Antonio, TX |
| November 20–22, 2015 | San Diego Convention Center, San Diego, CA |
| November 18–20, 2016 | Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, Boston, MA |
| November 17–19, 2017 | Music City Convention Center, Nashville, TN |

Participate in the 2014-2015 ACTFL Mentoring Program

This program is designed to help early career language teachers succeed in their current assignments and learn the skills to be successful long-term in their careers. The mentoring will be conducted virtually. Mentors and mentees will be matched by needs, skills, and experiences.

- To be considered as a mentee you must be a new teacher within your first 5 years of teaching.
- To be considered as a mentor you must have completed at least 3 years of teaching.
- If you do not fall within the stated requirements, please include an explanation of your specific circumstance in your application.

Mentees who successfully complete the program can earn 2 CEUs through George Mason University. Mentors will be entered into a raffle for a 1-year free ACTFL membership.

The Mentoring Program will run from September 2014 through May 2015. To participate in this program, read the program guidelines then complete the appropriate application. The application materials may be found and submitted at www.actfl.org/professional-development/career-resources/mentoring-program.

DEADLINE: Mentor and Mentee applications must be submitted by **August 22, 2014**.

For more information, contact: Jaime Bernstein at jbernstein@actfl.org, ACTFL Manager of Member Services.

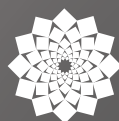
Find Out About New ACTFL Webinars Online

Check the ACTFL website (www.actfl.org/webinars) in September to access new webinars for Fall 2014.

LEAD

with LANGUAGES

—COMING IN 2015—
Start THE BUZZ with ACTFL's Video Overview



ACTFL

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON THE
TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

LEADWITHLANGUAGES.ORG

WHAT IS LEAD WITH LANGUAGES?

Lead with Languages is a movement to make languages a national priority. It intends to create a new generation of Americans competent in other languages and cultures, and better equipped to compete and succeed in the 21st century.

Lead with Languages will be a fully integrated campaign from ACTFL involving digital, earned and paid media, and celebrity involvement. It is national in scope, awareness based, and advocacy oriented.

WHY DO WE NEED A NEW CAMPAIGN?

No one knows better than language educators that the United States faces a huge challenge in our national lack of language capability. The ability to communicate in languages and with cultures other than our own has never been more vital in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world where American jobs and exports are more dependent than ever on foreign markets; where Americans are engaged diplomatically and militarily around the globe as never before; and where issues such as the environment, health and disease, poverty, development and peace are increasingly defined as global problems that require international understanding and cooperation . . .

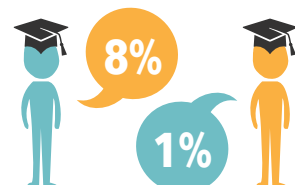
AND YET . . .



Less than 10% of Americans speak a foreign language



Only 18% of K-12 students study a language and for an average of only 2 years



Just 8% of college students study a foreign language and only 1% graduate with a language major

The United States currently faces a critical gap in language competence that has a major impact on American economic competitiveness and national security.

WHO ARE WE TARGETING?



Obviously, there has been plenty of discussion of this issue *within* the language education profession—now it is time to reach those other key audiences and stakeholders, including:

Parents: A prime audience to engage in this campaign, parents are heavily invested in the success of their children and are key influences in determining whether their children learn languages. They can also serve as vocal grassroots supporters for outreach efforts to education and policy leaders at the local, state, and federal levels.



Students: As the future leaders of America, students are the key to closing the language gap and a crucial audience for the campaign to excite and motivate about the possibilities that languages provide. In addition to the personal fulfillment that accompanies the acquisition of new language competency, languages prepare this next generation to compete in a more challenging job market and on the international stage.

HOW WILL WE ENGAGE THE PUBLIC?



Website: As the “one-stop” awareness-building resource and advocacy center of the campaign, *LeadwithLanguages.org* will serve as a one-of-a-kind hub where stakeholders can access a wide array of materials and tools connected to languages and language learning. It will also provide a platform for supporters to reach out to media, lawmakers, education decision makers, and others to voice support.

Social Media: Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube will cultivate a community of collective supporters that actively seek information about languages and are eager to have a voice in the ongoing discussion about enhancing prospects for individual and national success. Social media platforms will

also allow people who have learned foreign languages to share their experiences and excite others about language learning.

Collateral Materials: Informative materials, including brochures, media outreach templates and toolkits will reinforce the campaign message and present important stakeholders with strategic calls-to-action.

Events: Involvement at events, ranging from high-level fundraisers to community workshops to meetings on Capitol Hill, will mobilize supporters and help the campaign transition from online advocacy to offline action.

Partner Participation: Partnering with advocates and opinion elites in areas such as business, policy, and education will give

Lead with Languages the ability to reach a broader set of audiences and establish languages as a key element on the agendas of decision makers in those sectors.

Speaking Engagements: Speeches, media appearances, and lectures by high-profile language advocates, including members of our Honorary Council, will generate credibility, media coverage, and national excitement for the campaign.

Hill Outreach: *Lead with Languages* partners, sponsors, and advocates will regularly meet with policymakers and education leaders, both in Washington and at the state level, to ensure that the campaign messages resonate with this important segment of stakeholders.

WHEN WILL EVERYTHING HAPPEN?

Pieces are already falling into place for the big launch of the campaign in early 2015. ACTFL has applied for several major grants to help fund these efforts and we have already lined up a number of prominent supporters and potential celebrity spokespeople.

You will be hearing much more about the campaign at the 2014 ACTFL Convention in November, on the ACTFL website this fall, and in other communications and publications, including upcoming issues of *The Language Educator*. Stay tuned in!

WHAT CAN I DO RIGHT NOW? Share the Video!



Go to the *Lead with Languages* website and watch the short introductory video which announces and explains the need for the campaign. Next, SHARE it anywhere and everywhere—throughout your social media circles, within your schools and institutions, with students and parents, at Back-to-School Nights, in your local communities, and in whatever creative ways you can imagine.

With a length of just over a minute, the *Lead with Languages* video puts forth our compelling argument about why learning languages is critical for our students and the future of our country. So, tweet it, “like” it, and let everyone around you know what is coming as we *Lead with Languages*!



Watch the *Lead with Languages* video PSA in TLE Online at www.thelanguageeducator.org.



Businesses: With 95% of the world’s customers located outside of U.S. borders, languages are an important catalyst for U.S. enterprises to connect with overseas markets. Languages are also critical for businesses that seek to market to U.S. foreign-born populations.

Diplomatic/Military/Intelligence Officials: Demand for heightened language

competency among this professional segment will only grow in the years to come. Given the critical nature of languages in forging diplomatic ties and protecting the U.S. homeland, the voice of this sector will be key to the *Lead with Languages* campaign.

Education Leaders: Introducing a new generation of multilingual speakers into our workforce requires giving renewed attention

and prioritization of language education in our schools. *Lead with Languages* will collaborate with education leaders to drive this change in sensible ways.

Policymakers: As a change-oriented movement, *Lead with Languages* aims to supplement awareness with tangible policy outcomes that position linguistic and cultural competency as a national priority.



Interview

with ACTFL National Language
Teacher of the Year

Linda Egnatz



On behalf of the more than 12,000 ACTFL members, the ACTFL Officers, and the ACTFL Board of Directors, we offer you sincere congratulations, Linda, on being awarded the ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year for 2014!

Q&A

Q: Since you were chosen as our profession's ninth National Language Teacher of the Year at the 2013 ACTFL Annual Convention, you have been representing your fellow language educators and ACTFL as an ambassador for our profession throughout the United States. You have visited a number of small and large events, including state and regional conferences, to promote the importance of language learning. How and why do you juggle so many competing expectations as well as opportunities (i.e., teaching every day, leadership in your state organization, participation in numerous regional and national events)? What would you like to share with your colleagues about this experience?

A: The WHY is simple: It is our language learners. The HOW has been exciting, at times challenging, and at all times, rewarding. As the 2014 ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year, my role is to represent language educators and to advocate for language learners. The "juggling act" has been pure joy. At conferences, I've enjoyed meeting kindred spirits—new friends and colleagues from whom I've learned and with whom I've had the opportunity to collaborate. During my visits to schools, I have had the privilege of learning about a variety of effective language programs and the factors that make them successful. Two things were impressed upon me over and over again: (1) It is important to begin language study at the elementary level and provide support for teachers who are tasked with teaching both content and language acquisition; and (2) It is critical that we

seek out ways to work with our parents and communities to advocate for language learners. What I have learned will reframe my role as a state leader and more importantly my local interaction as a classroom teacher.

Q: No one begins a teaching career expecting to be the National Teacher of the Year. This recognition honors all you have accomplished in and out of the classroom. What is your advice to novice teachers for staying energized in a very challenging profession?

A: Being named the ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year has truly been an honor, but the greatest reward for any language teacher is seeing his or her students use the language in real ways with native speakers. If I have any advice for new teachers, it would be to pursue all avenues toward that goal.

Helena Curtain, an incredible language educator and advocate, shared a book with me titled *The Four Agreements* by Don Miguel Ruiz. Agreement Four: "Always Do Your Best" resonates with me and really reflects my WHY. Ruiz writes: "When you always do your best, you take action. Doing your best is taking the action because you love it, not because you're expecting a reward." Receiving this award has been a surreal experience for me. It doesn't represent what I sought to achieve; it represents what I've done because I love teaching students. I passionately believe that everyone deserves the chance to learn another language and that student commitment to language proficiency should be recognized.

To serve our students, we must first and foremost seek to sustain and grow our own language abilities. That can be a challenge when teaching novice learners and we are striving to provide them with comprehensible input. To teach 90% or more in the target language means that if you, like me, are teaching your second language, you need to continue to grow it. I choose to travel frequently, with and without students. Traveling not only provides me with opportunities to improve my language skills, it reminds me that language is dynamic and that its purpose is to communicate with others. Spending time in another culture helps me to bring classroom images to life—to connect students to real people and places and to real issues facing our world. Travel allows me to present more than a product to my students; it allows me to teach the practices and perspectives that truly form culture. I have a limited budget so I've chosen to travel with students for free using an educational travel company. It's energizing! When students discover that the language they use really does work, that they comprehend and are understood by native speakers, they're hooked for life. Retention is no longer a problem. Students gain a global perspective on tour and many have gone on to study abroad and become language majors or minors.

In the classroom, providing authentic comprehensible input is important. In our digital world, resources abound. I can access and provide students with written, video, and audio language materials beyond traditional classroom teaching materials. (Think: podcasts, YouTube, radio apps, online books and periodicals, Skype, websites and web-based language exchanges, etc.) In addition to maintaining my language skills and building those of my students, it's even more important to improve my teaching skills. Language educators can do this in so many ways. I take advantage of professional development opportunities such as conferences and classes or workshops specific to the areas I would like to improve. I've developed a personal learning network (PLN) of teachers who share my interests, goals, and passions. I learn through shared experiences and collaboration with these colleagues. I ask a lot of questions and seek out a mentor when faced with a new challenge or classroom prep. I read books and materials on a lot of topics. *The Language Educator*, for example, always offers useful ideas, insights, and resources.

Probably the most significant thing I do as a language teacher is to BELONG. I belong to and participate in language organizations. At the state level, my colleagues and I on the Illinois Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ICTFL) work together to support the needs of our Illinois teachers and students. Serving in this role has allowed me to grow and develop as a teacher and

leader. Participating in the activities of state, regional, and national organizations such as ACTFL provides me with a bigger, more vivid picture of the world of language education. Belonging has brought me valuable knowledge, resources, experiences, friendships and even scholarships to learn and travel.

Q: You have been a major proponent for the Seal of Biliteracy and you were instrumental in getting the seal adopted in your home state of Illinois last year. Why do you feel that the Seal is important in recognizing our students' achievements and in helping to highlight the value of multilingualism? What advice would you give to language educators in other states on how to pursue such recognition where they live?

A: Advocating for the Seal of Biliteracy has been a mission for me, because it goes to the heart of my WHY. Greta Lundgaard expressed it best for me in a Central States Conference workshop I attended when she said: "It's not about me, it's about students." The Seal of Biliteracy is all about students. It's about recognizing students for the time and efforts they've put in toward becoming highly proficient in a second language. As a nation, we've undervalued language learning. Unlike schools around the world where language learning begins in the elementary grades for all, we have some schools that offer no language at all. Others simply offer a two-year, college-entry program to be viewed as "college prep."

There is, however, good news. Visionary parents, communities, administrators, and legislators are supporting early language programs in greater numbers. School districts that offer immersion and dual language programs have waiting lists. I see the Seal of Biliteracy as a "backward-design" tool. It represents many desirable targeted goals: proficient users of English and a second language; globally competitive job candidates; citizens with respect for diversity; intercultural understanding; and, most importantly, language education based on proficiency outcomes. My hope is that school districts who adopt the program will come to realize that to increase the number of students who achieve the Seal of Biliteracy, they'll need to provide effective teaching models that lead to proficiency and begin offering language at lower levels.

For states and districts, the Seal of Biliteracy requires little change or cost to implement. Most school districts already have the testing systems in place (English and foreign language testing) and the Seal recognizes students who achieve a required level. District cost is as minimal as a certificate and the ink to print the certification on transcripts and diplomas. Testing for English already takes place (both for native speakers and English language

learners) and the costs for second language testing (AP, IB, AAPPL, etc.) in most districts is already borne by students. The Seal offers equal access, recognizing the importance of maintaining heritage languages while learning new ones. While cost is low, the value is high. Students who, through criterion-referenced testing, achieve the Seal of Bilingualism will stand out—both at universities and in the work world. Recognition ceremonies will bring the value of multilingualism to the community with local student faces as advocates and role models. It is at the community level that we have the most power to influence language education. When parents—highly motivated advocates for their children's future success—ask for change, it can happen. Like parents who seek out school districts with elementary language programs, it was the global competitiveness and job opportunities these future taxpayers (and voters) would possess that most persuaded Illinois legislators who voted unanimously in favor of the Seal of Bilingualism.

Q: You visited Capitol Hill in May 2014 to speak with national legislators, including Illinois Senators Dick Durbin and Mark Kirk, and you will continue to meet throughout the year with local policymakers and other dignitaries. As you speak with national, state, and local legislators from Washington, DC, to Springfield, what issues or points will you impress upon them? How have these messages been received?

A: In meetings with our legislators, I was encouraged by their favorable views toward language study. Senator Dick Durbin shared two stories that supported what have become for me “enduring understandings” about language learning. His first story was about his own mother who as a child spoke Lithuanian and who now, in her later years, is living in a Lithuanian neighborhood and reclaiming her heritage language. Unfortunately, like many immigrant parents, she did not teach her child her native tongue. I am an adoptive parent. Our daughter, Rosa, came to the United States from Guatemala when she was 11. I'm proud of her efforts to learn English, but I'm also thrilled that now that she is a mother, she is raising her children to speak both English and Spanish. Heritage languages are a global gift that we must find some way to support. The Seal of Bilingualism is one tool that can change the paradigm that immigrants should only speak English.

A second story that Sen. Durbin shared was of a visit to France. He had studied French, but when he was pick-pocketed in the Paris metro, his first concern was whether he should use the masculine or feminine when crying for help! The story resonated with me. When grammar worries preclude communication, we'll never achieve language proficiency. Greg Duncan of InterPrep, Inc., is often heard to say,



LEFT: Linda Egnatz, center, with Glastonbury Public Schools' language teachers and Rita Oleksak, Director of Foreign Languages, on Linda's left and parent and author Stacie Berdan, second from the right. **RIGHT:** Linda Egnatz shown here at the Illinois Governor's Mansion with Illinois State Superintendent of Education Chris Koch (to her right) and Illinois Education Association President Cinda Klickna and Illinois Federation of Teachers Representative Marcia Campbell.

“Intermediate language is messy.” If we don't allow students to create their own messy messages, mixing and matching language chunks as they can, proficiency growth won't happen. I mistakenly used to reward the “perfect” language users over the “messy” ones until the Oral Proficiency Interview training helped me to understand that I was giving A grades to the Novice users with their “highly practiced, memorized phrases” and B grades (or worse) to the true Intermediate users who were “creating with language” they had actually acquired.

My message to legislators is that language proficiency takes time. We need visible support and recognition of language study and we need language programs that begin in kindergarten. The Seal of Bilingualism can lead to both.

Q: ACTFL is launching a new public awareness campaign—*Lead with Languages*—which is meant to inspire people to support and celebrate language learning and multilingualism in our communities. As you have worked as an advocate for years for languages—and you have particularly embraced this role now as Teacher of the Year—what is your key message to those outside our profession? What do you think that ACTFL members will need to do support this greater effort?

A: My language teaching experience has been limited to high school and college levels. As the ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year, my role is to advocate for all language teachers, so one of my goals has been to learn more about early language education. I recently visited some amazing elementary schools in Catalina Hills (AZ), Milwaukee (WI), Glastonbury (CT), and Holliston (MA), where I observed the magic that early language education offers. In these communities, public awareness of the benefits of language profi-

ciency is front and center. I recently read Malcolm Gladwell's book, *Outliers*. He describes the success of outstanding individuals as a confluence of timing and opportunities. For our students, language and our role in their lives can be both. The day I visited Glastonbury, middle school students were being recognized for performance on national language exams. Several seventh and eighth graders received awards in two languages: Spanish and Russian! French and Chinese! I'm convinced that these are the students who will become outliers. In their book, *Languages and Children*, Helena Curtain and Carol Ann Dahlberg ask a question we should each ask of our parents, administrators, and legislators: "What academic and cognitive benefits are the students missing out on if they do not learn another language?"

This academic year, if you meet with parents at Back-to-School nights, rather than talk about curriculum, use a backward-design model and share your own WHY. Explain the economic, social, and cognitive benefits of language learning for students. Parents care most about their child's future success; pass out an article about the connection between language learning and higher test scores or performance in other academic areas. Mention the global competition in today's job world. Candidates apply online from anywhere in the world and if they are from a country other than the United States, the candidate is likely to be bilingual. Ask, "Will your child be able to compete?" Share with parents of beginning learners the college tuition savings of taking Advanced Placement tests. Help them envision their children as multilinguals. We need to be teacher advocates for students. Look for opportunities to bring long-term language study to the forefront. If you travel with students, ask local media to do feature articles and interview students about their learning experiences. Find a humanitarian effort in a target country to support. If your state offers the Seal of Biliteracy, you have an additional advantage to offer. Use your limited contact time with parents and the community wisely. Use it to advocate for your students and their future opportunities. Lead with Languages!

See p. 14 to learn more about this new campaign.

Q: This spring, you took a group of your students on a trip to Panama, which included not only sightseeing but also service learning and a visit to an indigenous Embera village. While we can all agree on the fun and excitement of taking a class trip abroad, in what ways do you see such a trip specifically benefits your students' understanding of other languages and appreciation of cultures? What else can language educators do to embrace the Communities standards every day in and out of their classrooms?

A: This may sound funny, but many students are surprised when their classroom language actually functions in the real world. They're excited and sometimes shocked when native speakers understand them or that they recognize words on signs and menus. I often hear a giddy student voice say, "I know what they're saying!" or "He understood everything I said!" Going to places previously only seen in a textbook or on a poster are also momentous. More than once I've heard a student say, amazed: "It's real." No classroom can be as powerful as the real world. While I may strive to offer real-world-like activities and assessments, they don't always feel authentic to students. Students beam with pride when they can successfully negotiate situations on tour. I rarely see that same confident look after I give a test. Unlike an in-class performance assessment, task completion wins over grammar every time on tour and is celebrated and photographed! Students take more language risks on tour. It's no longer about the grade; it's about getting their message across. Students who may have never raised their hands in class find their voices on a class trip.

In addition to the language learning and affirming benefits of travel, students grow emotionally and cognitively. They are exposed to how people live in other places. In class, a cultural product such as diet may seem strange,



ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year Linda Egnatz visited Washington, DC in May and met important leaders such as Assistant Majority Leader Dick Durbin (IL).



weird, or worse. In context, cultural practices and perspectives are more likely to be understood and less likely to be viewed as odd or criticized. Students are curious and have big hearts. Our visit to the Embera in Panama prompted culture shock when men wearing loincloths appeared to escort my Midwest suburban students upriver in dugout canoes. After our arrival at the village, my students were paired with Embera students and together they talked about how to preserve the environment and shared a meal. After a day together, hugs were given, tears were shed, and bonds between cultures were made. Short-term trips inspire my students to later spend semesters abroad. Each and every trip I take builds those connections—like spider webs connecting communities and continents. It is what I need every spring when my energy starts to lag. It reenergizes my WHY when I need it most.

For those who may not be able to travel, there are many ways to connect students to target language communities. The digital world offers a variety of interpersonal activities: Skype, Facetime, ePals, and school exchanges as well as

Read More

about the Panama trip that Linda Egnatz and her students took in April on p. 46.

numerous online language networks. Local humanitarian and service projects can connect students in a meaningful way to nearby communities, as well as those abroad. Students can share their projects on the web and in collaborative forums such as Wikis and Google Docs or produce target language products for local businesses, libraries, and park districts. The goal is to connect your students in meaningful ways with the target language community; students perform best for an authentic audience. Communication is, after all, the WHY behind language education.



ACTFL Leaders and Teacher of the Year Visit Capitol Hill

In May, ACTFL President Mary Lynn Redmond, ACTFL Executive Director Marty Abbott, ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year Linda Egnatz, ACTFL Board Member Todd Bowen, and many other language educators and leaders participated in visits with Members of Congress on Capitol Hill during the Joint National Committee for Languages-National Council for Languages and International Studies (JNCL-NCLIS) Delegate Assembly in Washington, DC.

During the visits, ACTFL leaders spoke with U.S. senators, representatives, and their staffs about the importance of federal funding for language learning and asked for their support in requesting a study from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences on how language instruction contributes to economic competitiveness. During a separate meeting with Roberto Rodriguez, Special Assistant to the President for Education Policy, Marty Abbott, Mary Lynn Redmond, and Linda Egnatz discussed the need for presidential support for language learning and were pleased to receive positive feedback from Mr. Rodriguez.



ABOVE: Mary Lynn Redmond meets with Assistant Majority Leader Dick Durbin.

BELOW: Linda Egnatz and Senator Mark Kirk (R-IL) discuss language education policy.



LEFT: Todd Bowen and Linda Egnatz meet with Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) about language learning.

RIGHT: Marty Abbott, Mary Lynn Redmond, and Linda Egnatz meet with Roberto Rodriguez, Special Assistant to the President for Education Policy.



Partners with ACTFL to Support Research Priorities



The National Federation of Modern Language Teachers' Associations (NFMLTA) is now joining with ACTFL to play a larger role in supporting research in the field of foreign language education. The NFMLTA has become a major supporter of the ACTFL Research Priorities Project and has currently authorized \$10,000 in dissertation support grants for its Phase III.

According to NFMLTA President Audrey Heining-Boynton, who is also a Past President of ACTFL, the Federation decided to make the financial commitment at this time in part to fulfill its mission, which is stated as *"the expansion, promotion, and improvement of the teaching of languages, literatures, and cultures throughout the United States by a variety of activities including but not limited to publication of The Modern Language Journal."*

Heining-Boynton notes that continuing the publication and high standards of the *MLJ* is the key responsibility of the 17-member organization, but it is not the only area where the NFMLTA can be involved in fulfilling its purpose.

"With our 100th anniversary approaching, the Board felt it was important to reevaluate and reconfirm our mission by supporting research for emerging scholars," she says. "Therefore, at our meeting in November 2013, we pledged \$10,000 to this purpose."

In 2014, the NFMLTA decided to use these funds to collaborate with ACTFL and support Phase III of the ACTFL Research Priorities Project. Heining-Boynton said that the NFMLTA's support of research will not be a one-time event, but that one of the initiatives the organization is undertaking is to continue to look for other opportunities to fund awards for research. "We want our support for research to be ongoing," she says.

The ACTFL Research Priorities Project under the direction of Eileen Glisan, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and Richard Donato, University of Pittsburgh, supports empirical research projects or dissertation studies in five priority areas that are currently critical to improving foreign language education:

- **Research Priority Area #1: Integration of Language, Culture, and Content**
 - Immersion and other innovative programs
 - Heritage language programs
- **Research Priority Area #2: Foreign Language Teacher Development**
 - Model teacher preparation programs
 - Mentoring
 - Preparing foreign language teachers for urban/rural settings
- **Research Priority Area #3: Classroom Discourse**
 - Use of L1 vs. L2
 - Interactional practices
 - Dialogic inquiry
- **Research Priority Area #4: High-Performing Language Programs**
 - Profiles of effective PK–16 teachers
 - Profiles of effective PK–16 classrooms
 - High-leverage pedagogical practices and/or assessment
- **Research Priority Area #5: Language Use in the Community**
 - Service learning
 - Study abroad

Phase III of the Research Priorities Project has now been completed and further details about the grant awards will be shared at a plenary session at the 2014 ACTFL Annual Convention, on the ACTFL website, and in an upcoming issue of *The Language Educator*.

The NFMLTA Board is currently doing a review of all aspects of the organization, such as its bylaws, budget, operations, to consider what can be done to best fulfill its mission and purpose.

"It's an exciting time for our organization as we consider how we can enhance the profession at large," says Heining-Boynton.

Learn more about the ACTFL Research Priorities Project at www.actfl.org/professional-development/actfl-announces-phase-iii-the-research-priorities-project.

Learn more about the National Federation of Modern Language Teachers' Associations at www.nfmlta.org as they gear up to celebrate the organization's 100th anniversary in 2016.

ACTFL/NFMLTA/MLJ Announce Dissertation Support Grants Competition

ACTFL, NFMLTA, and the *MLJ* are calling for applications for Dissertation Support Grants. The purpose of this collaboration is to help support two graduate students during the research and writing phase of their dissertations that focus on the field of language teaching and learning. The award amount is \$2,500; up to two grants per year may be awarded.

These grants will support graduate students in the fields of applied linguistics and language education at the dissertation writing stage. They can provide resources to graduate students at any stage of dissertation writing (e.g., data gathering, familiarization with relevant research, data analysis, or write-up of the findings).

Applicants must:

- have completed by the application deadline all requirements for the PhD/EdD, except the dissertation
- have an approved dissertation proposal with, if applicable, an approved IRB
- be enrolled in a doctoral program at an institution of higher education in the United States; they need not be citizens or permanent residents

A complete application includes: applicant contact information (name, physical address, email address, name of applicant's institution of higher education); a brief statement signed by the dissertation advisor/dissertation committee chair stating that the applicant has successfully defended his/her dissertation proposal, that the IRB process has been cleared (if appropriate to the study), and that the applicant has successfully completed all but the dissertation writing at the time of application for this grant; the proposed dissertation title; and a description of the proposed research. The description should include the purpose of the study; theoretical framework(s); research questions; methodology; importance of the study; and limitations.

Complete applications must be submitted at www.actfl.org/actfl-nfmlta-mlj-announce-dissertation-support-grants-competition by September 30, 2014.

Taking Language

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Building on the success of our award-winning theme series in the last six issues of *The Language Educator*, we will continue to bring you thought-provoking articles.

In response to the positive feedback received on the 2013–2014 theme series, we introduce a “focus topic” section for upcoming issues of the magazine.

The submitted articles presented in this issue on the topic, “Taking Language Beyond the Classroom,” were blind reviewed by two language education experts, in addition to staff from *The Language Educator* and ACTFL. See p. 63 for more information about contributing to upcoming focus topics and look for the focus topic section on “Creating Comprehensible Input and Output,” in the next issue.

We thank North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Special Assistant for Global Education Helga Fasciano for writing an introduction to this important topic.



- Using 21st Century Skills to understand and address global issues
- Learning from and working collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions, and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue in personal, work, and community contexts
- Understanding other nations and cultures, including the use of non-English languages

As language educators, we have prided ourselves in being at the forefront of preparing our students for the world beyond their own community. Methods and strategies for language acquisition have changed (or not—depending on your viewpoint), but at the core of our instruction we have held firm that we provide our students with the ability to explore and understand their world, in order to become the future leaders in their communities able to address local and global issues. The World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (www.actfl.org/publications/all/world-readiness-standards-learning-languages) create a platform to springboard beyond the classroom and help establish lifelong learners of language through the intersection of Communication with Cultures, Comparisons, Connections, and Communities. The Communities goal

area points to learners using their language in local and global communities, relating that language to the learner's life and providing purpose for the continued use of that language. As educators, we all have anecdotal stories of students finding that dream job because of their language skills or sharing with us how they have used their learned language in their travels. We see those successes highlighted regularly in the “Language Impact” section of *The Language Educator*.

But why is this not the case for all of our language learners? Are they not able to see how the language they study is relevant to them today? Even with the release of the 21st Century Skills framework, the direct importance of language in our everyday life and work is sometimes presented as a “nice to have”—rather than an essential component.

Learning a language is not just a series of well-articulated sequential courses—not if one is to become a lifelong consumer. Experiential learning provides the learner with customized opportunities to connect to other languages and the related cultures. It allows learners to see how their own perception intersects with the many viewpoints represented in cultures. Experiential language learning opportunities include a variety of practices such as travel, classroom, and school partnerships. Today, technology is a great equalizer in access to

The Framework for 21st Century Learning—the “vision for student success in the new global economy” offered by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (www.p21.org)—presents a view of teaching and learning that includes Global Awareness as one of the essential Life and Career Skills. The definition for Global Awareness from the framework is as follows:

What are your learners doing (in or out of the classroom) that demonstrates Global Awareness?

Beyond the Classroom

BY HELGA FASCIANO



Share your answer to the questions on this page in *TLE Online* at www.thelanguageeducator.org.

How are you preparing your learners to interact confidently with native speakers?

explore language learning opportunities. Authentic experiential learning is enhanced when we engage local and global community partners to share current perspectives, resources, and opportunities for our learners.

At the same time, contact with native speakers can be unnerving. This is no longer a predictable classroom simulation and the chance for errors increases exponentially. Intentional and thoughtful selection of instructional materials and resources help scaffold the learner's ability to build their toolbox of strategies to negotiate meaning in these unpredictable experiences. However, it only takes one or two successes in these types of learning environments to give the learner an intrinsic motivation to be a risk taker in using the language for life or work.

Community engagement in language learning provides the learner with the opportunity to understand and engage with the target cultures and gain insight into the nuances of the regional language and perspectives. Community engagement, whether local, national, or international, can also strain our instructional norms or references. Educators must also develop their toolboxes to help them negotiate meaning and develop the ability to comprehend the multiple perspectives.

Learning a language beyond the classroom walls can include online, app, or face-to-face instruction. It can exist in a variety of environments, such as weekend heritage schools. The purpose the learner has in mind for using languages can inform which languages matter most to that learner.

Recently, a career and technical education specialist shared with me that the students in a certain region of her state (where tourism is a main form of income) had indicated that they wished they had access to another lan-

guage at their school. The students believed it was a matter of economics. Although the language they were learning was used by many citizens in their region, the language used by the tourists in their eateries was different and being able to communicate with their customers in their language would have greatly increased their tips! These students had identified a personal need for a language for a purpose beyond their classrooms. How might the educators in this region work with the business community to recognize this need and provide a solution?

This story also points to the connections with the current career and college-ready initiatives which define what graduates need to know and be able to do to be successful in a globally interconnected world. This includes what current job recruiters refer to as a “T-shaped” employee—where the base of the “T” represents the depth of expertise or skill of the employee and the top indicates the ability and willingness to collaborate across international teams. Here we see a direct correlation to the Global Awareness definition from the Framework for 21st Century Learning. The ability to use languages other than English will be critical to our future graduates' success.

States are recognizing that a bilingual work force is critical to their economic future. Different initiatives around dual language education and global readiness have emerged. The adoption of the Seal of Biliteracy through state legislation is a recognition of the rich human capital resource of native, heritage, and classroom-trained language speakers and citizens with intercultural skills.

As educators, we must be willing to understand how we investigate and understand perspectives (including our own) in

the world and how we frame our communication around issues in our classrooms. We must be willing to go beyond our own experiences and investigate with our students some different global perspectives—and not only from the target language cultures. We must take the next step to understand the perspectives on an issue from non-target language cultures. We must find ways to go beyond the topical or surface level of cultural understanding and language learning to be a risk taker and do the deep-dive with our students, allowing them to be autonomous as we accompany them on their journey. We must encourage our students to bring in new technology to enhance the learning experience. Taking these risks ensures that students will have the opportunity to become lifelong learners in one or many languages for any self-identified reasons.

In the articles that follow, language educators share what they have experienced in the process of taking language beyond the classroom, including improving the study abroad experience; connecting with classrooms around the world; utilizing online resources; making community connections; and focusing on practical applications, tasks, and audiences. You will no doubt become inspired, as I have, from many of these real-life examples. Taking language learning beyond our classrooms requires us to become that “T-shaped” educator, with deep knowledge of our subject matter and a willingness to collaborate across international teams. Will you take on this challenge? Where will you start?

Where will you start in meeting the challenge to become a “T-shaped” educator?



Making Study Abroad Meaningful, Intentional, Experiential, and Transformative

BY MARTINA LINDSETH
AND JOSHUA R. BROWN

Educators are constantly striving to make language instruction applicable beyond the classroom. We urge our students to try, experience, and live the language in the world, to become global citizens, and to remember that entire groups of people and cultures actually speak the language that we call “foreign.” For most learners, taking the language beyond the classroom is best suited for study abroad. It is in that environment that students meld not only their proficiency from the classroom, but also their cultural competence. We see a study abroad context as one where the interconnectedness of the host cultures with the four other Cs of the World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (Communication, Comparisons, Connections, Communities) can be both dynamic and meaningful.

As language educators, we felt that our study abroad program, which sends intermediate-level German majors and minors to Marburg, Germany, was a perfect opportunity for them to experience German culture and language. The program

is a semester-long stay at the university, in university housing, with language and literature courses specifically designed for exchange students. Instruction is exclusively in German and increases in difficulty as the semester progresses. However, our students’ evaluations of the program brought some cause for concern.

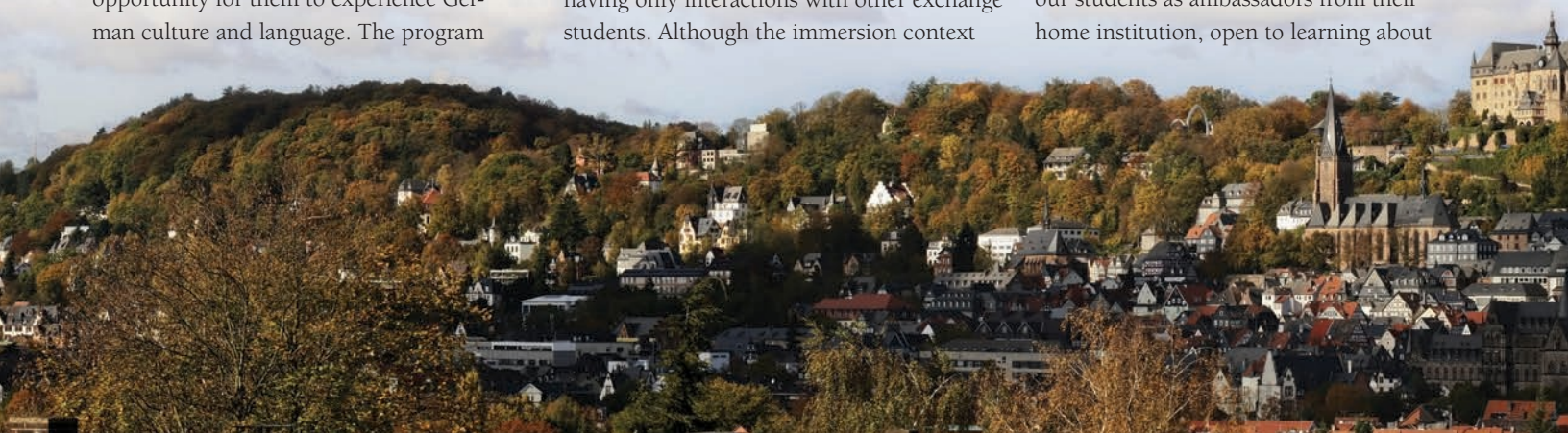
“I Didn’t Meet Any Germans”

When we took over as advisors for the program a few years ago, we were surprised and disappointed to learn that the majority (63%) of our students from the previous year disagreed with the statement: “My study abroad experience allowed me to really experience the host culture.” The evaluation format is the same for all study-abroad programs and administered by our university’s Center for International Education. When we first saw the results we were keen on investigating the matter further. In the students’ written responses, they lamented having only interactions with other exchange students. Although the immersion context

was right outside their windows, they were not immersed. Instead, the students were isolated and sitting in German language courses without any interaction with the host culture and their hosts.

We have now come to realize that not every study abroad experience is automatically experiential by its own virtue and right. Our program was apparently in a rut as a simple “transfer [of] academic credits from one traditional discipline-based institution to another without intentionally utilizing the international experience as the basis for learning,” so explained by Ann Lutterman-Aguilar and Orval Gingerich in their article, “Experiential Pedagogy for Study Abroad: Educating for Global Citizenship,” in *Frontiers* (www.frontiersjournal.com/issues/vol8/vol8-07_luttermanaguilargingerich.htm).

Of course, we hoped that our study abroad programs would in fact go beyond the simple transfer of academic credit by contributing to global awareness—seeing our students as ambassadors from their home institution, open to learning about



global systems and cultures. Therefore, we wanted, and needed, to change our study abroad program to facilitate more experiential and intentional activities aimed at interacting more meaningfully with the host culture. It came down to the question of how we could push students to take the language outside the classroom and apply it to their immersive context, thus providing them with a productive blend of experiential and intentional activities for their language and cultural development.

“Task” Force to the Rescue

In response to these disappointing evaluations, we adapted suggestions from Marc Cadd’s 2012 article in *Foreign Language Annals*, “Encouraging Students to Engage with Native Speakers During Study Abroad,” (onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1944-9720.2012.01188.x/abstract). Cadd offered useful advice for implementing tasks into the study abroad curriculum to encourage students to engage in meaningful exchange within the host culture.

We wanted our tasks to create a learning situation that not only aids their proficiency in German, but also their competence as a global citizen. We chose six tasks from Cadd’s list and added a final task for our students to visit an actual German university course. Each task provided a situation in which the student would engage and then presented them with a series of questions to guide their discussions and reflections. Our tasks differed from Cadd’s in several important ways:

1. **Tasks were modified** to fit a German-speaking context and sequenced according to increasing linguistic difficulty and learner “risk.” We decided

to progressively expose our students to engage with the host culture. By increasing the linguistic difficulty, students found that they had to rely on complex German, as well as on other communicative strategies (e.g., circumlocution).

2. **Several tasks were repeated** once for students to reflect on both their changing (inter)cultural competence and functional proficiency over time. It is through this reflection that students were able to think about their growth in the host culture, not only through the language they were using in their reflections, but also in thinking about the acts they were describing.
3. **Tasks were grouped together into four thematic modules** and we allowed students to choose among different options within the modules so they could engage in the interactions with the host culture that fit their learning, motivational, and personality style best. If a student felt uncomfortable talking about politics, for example, they could complete another task.
4. **Reports, including reflective statements, were completed in the target language.** We saw this as a perfect opportunity to allow students to combine the 5 Cs more holistically and create a better environment for their growth, not only interculturally, but also linguistically.
5. **Task reports were submitted at two benchmarks during the semester** and feedback was provided after the first submission. By providing mid-semester feedback, we were able to

work with the students on their language development, give them encouragement to continue improving their proficiency, and cultivate within the students an ability of critical reflection upon their experiences.

The tasks that we chose from Cadd’s list are as follows. Students needed to complete three tasks from Modules A and B by mid-semester and a task from C and D by the end of the semester and both times submit short essays reporting on their findings and reflecting on the experiences:

Module A

Task 1:

Ask 2–3 members of the culture for directions to one of the following: a bank, restaurant, post office, movie theater, etc.

Task 2:

Call a business you are interested in and ask when it is open and where it is located.

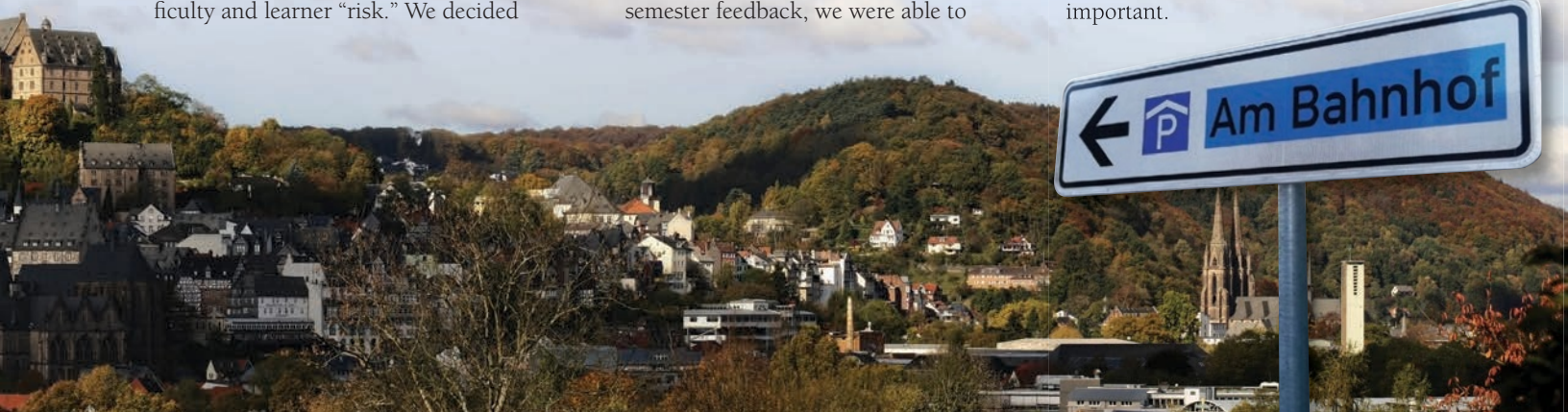
Module B

Task 1 (on an excursion):

Identify a museum, park, means of transportation, etc., that is representative of the culture. Find at least two members of the culture and inquire about why it represents that culture (e.g., what does the Washington Monument tell about the United States?).

Task 2:

Identify and attend a festival, fair, public event, etc., that is celebrated in the culture. Speak with at least two members of the culture about the event. Choose two who are different (e.g., young vs. old, male vs. female). Ask why the event is important.



Module C**Task 1:**

Ask two members of the culture for their views on the United States, President Obama, etc. Ask if they view the people of the United States any differently than they view the government.

Task 2:

Identify an issue or event that is controversial. Read two newspapers and compare/contrast the information there. Also speak to at least one member of the culture about the event. Ask how important it is, whether it will have a long-term impact, and so on, as appropriate.

Module D**Task:**

Attend a lecture at the university.

The questions to guide the reflective reports vary slightly from task to task. The following series is a representative example:

What did you learn? Was it the same as you expected? Was it difficult to talk about this topic? If so, why? Did you learn anything meaningful about the culture? If so, what? Did you notice any differences between your style of communication and theirs when talking about the topic? If so, what were they? Did you have problems understanding them? If so, what did you do about it?

Mission Accomplished

According to the latest program evaluation administered by our institution's Center for International Education, one immediate benefit of the modifications was that the vast majority (83%) of students agreed that they "really experienced the host culture" in study abroad. This was a great improvement from the previous year's 37% agreement with the same statement.

Students' written reflections about the tasks collected via an after-program survey echoed their strong sentiments from the university-level evaluation:

"More often than not, my conversations with the [native speakers] had some inter-

esting insights on many topics and would make me question things or realize things I would not have seen . . . the tasks did shed light on more in-depth differences which I found to be rather enlightening."

"I strongly agree that these tasks helped me develop a better understanding of the cultures in Germany. I don't think I would have ever gotten to figure out or understand some of the things that I have without the help from these tasks. They were definitely a great learning tool."

Perhaps most importantly, we noticed a strong movement from a monocultural mindset to a more intercultural mindset among our students who completed the tasks:

"Doing these tasks not only helped me understand other individuals' beliefs but also my own. You never really examine your own culture and beliefs willingly, but these tasks really made me have a deeper and better understanding of my own beliefs as a person."

Reflections from the students' evaluation of the tasks show that they valued these tasks and considered both their native and target cultures beyond stereotypes. While students found the greatest benefit in reflecting on the host and their own cultures, they observed that their proficiency improved as well:

"As I know my German skills have increased since I arrived, the tasks did help in learning vocabulary I would not have normally come across."

As a result, the study abroad experience was one in which the learning environment beyond the classroom was not only beneficial for the application of language, but also for the students' growth as individuals in an ever-changing and increasingly global environment.

Looking Ahead

We will continue to use the tasks. We hope to strengthen our cultural and linguistic pre-study abroad opportunities, so that students are better equipped before they enter the host culture. During several meet-

ings throughout the semester leading up to the study abroad experience, we explain and discuss our rationale in doing the tasks. We have found this to increase students' motivation and engagement. We also provide them with potential linguistic elements they may need for completing some of the tasks (e.g., talking on the telephone). While this pre-study abroad information is shared several times during the fall semester before they leave, it might be more meaningful to the student to incorporate this information into a structured credit-bearing course in preparation for their study abroad experience.

We have also asked our students to devise their own tasks that they deem beneficial and challenging for the next group of students. In so doing, we directly involve our students in both the learning process and the learning goals.

Our current data show that students with lower pre-program proficiency perceived themselves to benefit most from these tasks. We would like to investigate why this might be the case and perhaps develop more advanced tasks to be completed by students with higher proficiency levels.

In the future, we plan to develop a Likert-scale survey to solicit students' self-evaluations about their intercultural competence to better gauge their movement from monoculture to intercultural competence. We are considering adapting the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale developed by Guo-Ming Chen and William Starosta, 2000 (eric.ed.gov/?id=ED447525).

Study abroad programs are considered highlights of our students' academic careers and personal development. However, they are not automatically experiential and transformative for all participants. We have found that carefully designed tasks can guide students to take the language outside the classroom to engage in experiential and intentional interactions with members of the host culture and language, thus providing opportunities conducive to students' holistic growth.

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Using

SOCIAL

MEDIA

to Create

Community Within the Classroom and Beyond

BY NICOLE SHERF AND TIESA GRAF

With the plethora of technical applications available online, the trick for teachers seeking to incorporate them into lessons is finding the most appropriate one for their needs. These social media tools offer a range of possible interactive activities to engage students in community language learning. Whether you're a technological novice or proficient with technology, we all recognize that our "digital native" students experience life and create community through online tools. It is our responsibility to consider how we can meet our students at their technological level to best support them as we create online community connections in the target language to enhance their class experience. However, special care must be taken to ensure authentic interaction, communicative purpose, and student safety.

Here we will explore a variety of tools with some learning scenarios both inside and outside the walls of the classroom as well as within a larger digital community. Purposeful communication and interaction, especially when it extends in some way beyond the classroom walls, engenders a stronger sense of community among students who might otherwise not connect as fully.

Online Tools to Create and Experience Community

New technological applications are appearing all the time to entice users seeking a diverse online experience with a wider community. There are a variety of considerations when selecting a technological application to use in a class setting or as an extension activity at home, not the least of which is the level of interactivity that is possible through the use of the tool. Our goal should be to find a tool that allows students to interact in an open-ended and creative way about topics of interest and relevance to them.

S Schoology

There are a variety of interesting tools that class communities can use either to respond to specific teacher-assigned discussion or to hold more open-ended discussions. In an attempt to create a meaningful class forum for discussion and language practice in the more relaxed after-school environment, Laura Fox, an eighth grade Spanish teacher in Reading, MA, created a 6-week action research project in which her students interacted in a variety of ways for homework assignments through a discussion forum called Schoology. She wanted to discover how the use of the forum would affect student confidence in conversations in class and inspire them to connect with peers.

At www.schoology.com, students are logged in by class by the teacher, and interact with one another through the posting of comments or responses. The discussion topic can be presented by the teacher at the start of what will then become a student-directed thread of conversation and can be enhanced with the uploading of documents or links. Like many social media sites, participants in the forum can like a comment, respond directly to a comment, or make an independent comment. In Fox's project, the task was changed weekly, and the students were required to participate in the posting a minimum of two times a week, and to interact with one another as much as possible. Some of the topics of discussion included the investigation of and conversation about a popular Argentine singer, responses to a question about their favorite places, and reasons for the importance of language learning. Some of the topics required interaction with authentic resources, such as the songs and websites of the singer, and others were more open-ended and based on student interests and ideas.

Student surveys given before and after the Schoology project clearly demonstrated that as a result of participation in the forum, participants felt less anxious and more confident using Spanish in class. Surveys also showed that students had more interest in class and an improved attitude towards Spanish study after the project.

"Interestingly, the more active participants in class were not those who participated most actively in the forum, which seemed to offer a setting in which to converse more openly," reports Fox, who will incorporate the forum in her classes from the start of the new school year, and develop class activities that extend to forum activities for homework. Fox states that the forum worked as an "equalizer," offering opportunities to shine for those students who, for a variety of reasons were more hesitant to speak up in class.



Twitter

Leanne Cirigliano, a high school Spanish teacher in Medford, MA, also developed an action research project, but she used Twitter with her Spanish II Honors class with the goals of promoting student interaction at home and developing a deeper sense of community in class. Students needed to create an account on www.twitter.com and were given the opportunity to tweet about any topic they desired provided that they were communicating solely in the target language.

"Although my class was small, there were three very distinct groups that did not interact much with each other in class," says Cirigliano. "The lines between the groups were erased by the use of social media, and this extended to the classroom." Students developed relationships in the class that would not have necessarily occurred had they not been participating online with each other outside of class.

For the project, Cirigliano created a hashtag (#) for the class that had to be included with each tweet that was sent. This meant that though they were tweeting within the general Twitter community, the students had the ability to read and comment on each other's

tweets just by including and clicking on the hashtag. They did not receive tweets from people outside their class under the hashtag, even though their conversations were not private. Different than Fox's study, Cirigliano did not impose discussion topics, hoping to elicit true interaction within the group. As a result, students shared what they were doing and what had happened to them. Students would often reference each other's tweets during class. When one student dyed his hair purple and posted a picture of it with an explanation of what he had done, the entire class was excited to see it in person and the class discussion was animated. Upon completion of the project, student surveys reflected that students felt that Twitter helped the class to focus on community building. One student wrote, "We responded to each other and carried on conversations with people that we might not have talked to in class." Another student commented: "It was a new way to connect with people that you didn't know that well."



WeSpeke

Establishing community within our class walls through the interaction and open exchange of ideas out of class and online has been demonstrated in the above examples to reduce student anxiety and create a sense of community within the class. If you are looking to create community with a larger native-speaking community, other activities like student exchanges, pen pals, and guest speakers are all valid options. There are, however, online sites that allow for a free global network to practice languages and to learn about cultures. WeSpeke, for example, offers a unique opportunity for language students to connect to the community using the target language in an authentic way. Students can communicate both inside and outside of the classroom setting with other students from across the globe using text, audio and/or video.

Tiesa Graf, high school Spanish teacher in South Hadley, MA, explored the program on her own before involving her students. She set up a free teacher account at www.wespeke.com and was quickly flooded



Some Tools and Guidelines from WeSpeke

- Free, easy-to-use format with live text, audio, and/or video chats available
- Consent form templates for parents and information to distribute to administrators
- Matches provided between your class and other classes (national and international) to meet your needs
- Scheduling tool available to facilitate organizing chat time
- Chat partners limited to someone four years older or younger for those 17 and younger (i.e., a 13-year-old will not get matched with anyone older than 17)
- Instant disconnect option available and WeSpeke will investigate all flagged conversations and/or members. WeSpeke will remove any inappropriate members from the community
- Upon request, general reports provided about student activity that includes number of logins, invitations sent, appointments (with time) requested, number and length of conversations, usage of conversation tools, and the number of times they used the text chat within a conversation
- Teacher resource guide available with sample activities and projects based on the National Standards

with requests to chat. After identifying a few initial interests (e.g., music, politics), the program matched her with potential chat friends who were trying to learn English and were very proficient Spanish speakers. Whether she decided to meet them by text, audio, or video, she set the parameters of her interaction. For example, one might offer to practice English for the first 20 minutes and then Spanish for the next 20 minutes.

Graf has been using WeSpeke with her Spanish IV and V classes, using in-class, text-only chats. Students quickly found matches and were thrilled to be communicating with native students from Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, and Argentina within 5 minutes of signing up.

"We spend time brainstorming questions to guide conversations based on our current theme of study, and students also have the freedom to learn about topics of interest to them," says Graf. Students have been motivated to use WeSpeke outside of the classroom and once a week they share with classmates what they have learned from their interactions. The sharing time has led to great follow up in the target language (e.g., "I didn't know that Brazilians were experiencing such hardship regarding the World Cup happening in their country." "I had no idea about the level of unrest occurring today in Venezuela."). These opportunities have led to further research and discussion directed by theme and student interest. As a result, students are using the target language both inside and outside of the classroom by connecting to the global community.

Facebook

Facebook is widely used by students and adults alike to maintain contact with acquaintances to update them on your events and activities. Elizabeth Blood, French Professor at Salem State University, recently revamped her French conversation course to include posts and comments on the French Club Facebook group page which had been created previously. The page is for students in the program, alumni, professors, and community members who speak French. As such, students were not just posting to one another, but to a wider community of French speakers of different levels (including native speakers) who all had an interest in the college community.

Students could post on a variety of topics, but most posted on French-related themes, such as films they'd recently seen, articles they came across in the news, and music or videos they found on YouTube. Sometimes they simply posted a question or a comment about something they had talked about in class. This allowed students to get to know each other better, to practice using informal conversational phrases, to improve question formulation, and to make connections with other students. The goal of the course was for students to gain confidence in interacting with others, particularly with native speakers, but the Facebook group offered the added benefit of giving students a space to support and encourage each other, creating a stronger community within the classroom when they met face-to-face.

Student surveys given at the start and end of the course showed that the vast majority of students felt that their French proficiency had improved and, further, most indicated that they felt more confi-

dent in their abilities to interact with native speakers of French as a result of the conversations through Facebook and other social media, as well as face-to-face interactions and interviews. The survey also showed that students' knowledge of and interest in Francophone cultures increased substantially, two indicators of improved intercultural awareness important for effective communication in French. Blood states, "It is clear that the online forum facilitated conversation among students and other French speakers outside of class and that it had a positive impact on the interactions among students in class as well."

Ensuring Authentic Interaction

The careful selection of which program or application to use is important so that the activities that follow meet intended pedagogical purposes. Many applications offer only a simulated interactive experience and should be avoided unless the communicative objective for students is purely presentational. For example, there are a variety of tools that allow for the creation of animated characters to interact in a dialogue on screen, or a display of text and pictures allowing for some explanation. These applications offer the opportunity for a role play, or the presentation of a dialogue or content rather than a true conversation or exchange of ideas. Though these applications may have their pedagogical use, they do not create an interactive experience for the students nor do they allow for the creation of community unless they are shared and elicit reactions and commentaries.

The parameters of the interaction need to be established ahead of time by the teacher as well as the expected level of participation and interaction of the students. As engaged as your students might be in the activity, there is no escaping that this is a course assignment or requirement which may hinder open communication and could dampen some enthusiasm. For this reason, before the class begins to engage with the application, it is important to develop a rubric to describe in detail the number, type, and quality of interactions that you are expecting of each student. It is also a good idea to create a list of class rules of etiquette and safety for the interactions with consequences if the rules are not followed.

Finally, providing models of effective and expected posts, communication, and/or interaction is the only way to ensure high-quality student responses to the task. Midway through her project, Cirigliano was finding that the posts were not as full and complete as they could be so she again presented the rubric and the class discussed some sample anonymous posts based on the criterion of the rubric and the quality of the posts improved as a result.

Fox's Schoology project demonstrated that the weeks in which she, as teacher, interacted more in the forum, the students were also more active. This was a disappointment to her since the goal of the project was to foster student interaction, but they seemed to rely on her encouragement. It is sometimes difficult through an assignment to expect authentic and enthusiastic interaction, especially if your students are reticent language learners, but in many cases, it is the use of the social media tool that can be the impetus to motivate those students.

As a final consideration, since the focus of the activity is interaction and building community through this interaction, the criterion of assessment of student progress toward this goal should focus on this rather than their grammatical accuracy, spelling, and vocabulary choices. This is not to say that precision is not important, but it should be considered in the context of how well the message was delivered.

Protecting the Identities of Students and Ensuring Their Safety

In a K–12 setting, it is a good idea to get your principal's permission before using social media with your classes in any capacity. For minors, it also makes sense to get permission from your students' parents. They want to know what you are doing in class and, for the most part, will be as excited as the students. These kinds of class projects are great ad-

vocacy and lots of fun. However, some parents may have concerns about how you are protecting their children's identities online and/or about the types of interactions that will take place, especially with more open social media sites such as Twitter, WeSpeke, and Facebook.

In Cirigliano's Twitter project, one of the parents did not want her daughter to participate because she was concerned about her online presence in terms of upcoming college applications. She was hesitant about her daughter's overuse of social media. Cirigliano offered a variety of options for participation and the parent selected the most innocuous offering. She had her daughter email the tweet to Cirigliano, who posted it for her. It is important to respect the concerns of the parents in these types of projects.

In Graf's case, the bulk of the WeSpeke interaction happened at the laboratory at school under teacher supervision. Parents are expected to approve and supervise the at-home conversations. WeSpeke offers a variety of resources including parent consent-form templates and guidelines for class usage, which were adapted and signed by parents before the project began.

Blood was more concerned about student privacy on Facebook than about safety issues, given the age of her students (college-level, 18+). She made Facebook participation one of several options for the weekly conversational assignment. It made sense to use the French Club's departmentally administered group, so that conversation was limited to those who were motivated to communicate in French with others. In addition, the moderator could delete any inappropriate posts or reject any group members if necessary. These kinds of controls facilitate the process.

In any case, thoughtful planning and well-articulated expectations are essential to setting the tone and encouraging safe and authentic interactions in the class and beyond. In the K–12 arena, permissions are especially important both from the administration as well as parents, and the code of conduct needs to be clear among the students. These well-laid-out plans enable opportunities that can ultimately be an invaluable component of the learning experience.

Time to Get Started

Getting up to speed with the variety of technologies that make sense for you and your classes may take some time and patience. If you are not as technologically adept as you would like to be, remember your students' experiences learning language in your class. It is only through practice, and trial and error, that you gain technological proficiency. Just like you tell your students when they get frustrated in their language learning: If you are not making mistakes, you are not trying hard enough! Sometimes, an application that works well with one group may not be the right fit for another. Keep in mind your goals for the use of the application and play with it a bit yourself so that you feel comfortable describing the process and avoiding the pitfalls with your classes.

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Tiesa Graf is Department Chair and Spanish teacher at South Hadley High School, South Hadley, Massachusetts.

Resources

Sites suggested in this article

- **Schoology:** <https://www.schoology.com>
Free academic-based social network that focuses on collaboration
- **Twitter:** <https://twitter.com>
Free public online social network where posts are limited to 140 characters
- **WeSpeke:** en-us.wespeke.com
Free global community to practice languages, share interests, and make connections
- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com>
Free public online social network program

Other possible sites to encourage interaction

- **Edmodo:** <https://www.edmodo.com>
Free social learning platform for students, teachers and parents
- **Blogger:** <https://www.blogger.com/home>
Free blog platform where students can interact with content posted by teachers/classmates
- **Google Drive/Docs:** www.google.com/docs/about
Free tool to share, peer edit, and collaborate
- **Today'sMeet:** <https://todaysmeet.com>
Free tool to share back-channel conversations, reflections, and questions in real time



Share your answer to these questions in TLE Online at www.thelanguageeducator.org.

How are you using these resources to create authentic audiences for your language learners?

What additional resources would you recommend?

Building Cross-Cultural Awareness Through Intercultural Exchange

BY LINA LEE



Often, students do not have opportunities to use the target language to interact with native speakers outside of class. Blog exchange is an excellent venue for creating a community of intercultural exchange with two different schools. Through social networking, students not only gain cultural knowledge but also become more aware of their own beliefs and attitudes toward their own culture. A colleague of mine from the University of León, Spain, and I have collaborated and created a successful online intercultural exchange project. The exchange consisted of three parts:

1. *Getting to know each other via Twitter.* To build a sense of community, both groups spent time tweeting each other to share and exchange personal interests, academic work, and cultural perspectives.
2. *Exchanging cross-cultural perspectives via blogging.* Both groups produced five blog entries concerning typical young people's lives and local or regional cultures. Upon completion of blog assignments, all URLs were posted in the class wiki for viewing. Students read and commented on each of their partner's blogs. They also gave corrective feedback to each other to develop linguistic awareness.

3. *Discussing controversial issues via podcasting.* Students in pairs created podcasts on controversial topics. Each recording was made within a dialogue format in which students discussed and debated the chosen topic. The recordings were embedded into blogs for viewing. Both groups were required to listen to their partners' podcasts and provide feedback to one another. Students were free to listen to any recordings that interested them.

"The development of students' intercultural competence should be the core of language instruction in the age of globalization," says Steven Thorne, an Applied Linguistics Professor at Portland State University. Interaction with native speakers exposes students to firsthand cultural observations and cross-cultural pragmatics within social contexts. It is not surprising to hear that the majority of my students had a rewarding experience with the exchange. Students would not have gained the same in-depth cultural understanding they got through participating in the exchange outside of class had they only had in-class meetings.

For intercultural exchange with native speakers, teachers can use these sites to find partner schools and communities: www.uni-collaboration.eu and

www.viavenues.org/about-via. To provide students with the opportunity to interact with native speakers using real-life scenarios, it's worth considering LanguageTwin (<https://www.languagetwin.com/#loginPage>). This platform enables students to talk to native speakers over video chat. Teachers can create their own content and upload it to the site. All video chats are recorded and archived. Teachers can easily retrieve them to evaluate students' progress over time in their speaking ability.

For me, the most important aspect of building an online learning community is to connect students with real-world experiences in order to develop their interpersonal communication skills by interacting with their peers and native speakers. They also gain interpretive communication skills through reading authentic text or listening to broadcasting, and presentational communication skills through making voice recordings for speaking practice. Additionally, students learn about different cultural practices and products, and reflect the perspectives of cultures through comparisons of the target culture and their own.

Lina Lee is a Professor of Spanish and Chair of the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at the University of New Hampshire, Durham, New Hampshire.

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The Classroom Without Walls Initiative

How One School Learned That It Starts With One

By **CARRIE TOT**



"Is this serious?" My daughter Aly, a student in my Level 1 Spanish class, blurted in her broken Spanish as we finished reading an article about children living in a dump in Guatemala City. "They eat out of the dump? They eat next to dogs?"

I had designed my unit around the novel *Esperanza* by Carol Gaab and this supplementary reading about the dump was part of the teacher's guide for the novel. In the lesson plan book, I had written: *Read and discuss article about children living in the dump and compare the daily life of these children with our daily lives*—but the lesson became so much more. It turned out that what I had planned was irrelevant as my class began to puzzle and plan for how WE might help! I was fascinated by how my planned unit took on a life of its own. I had gathered a lot of authentic resources to help my kids connect with the people of Guatemala but I had not planned for the path we eventually followed. It was an opportunity for me to let them direct the course of their learning.

Students knew that many families in Guatemala lived on an income of less than a dollar a day, so our first on-the-spot activity was a list of things that we spend \$1 on that are "luxury items." Students listed apps for their smartphones, candy and drinks, lottery tickets, and many more items. Next we made a list of possible fundraisers. This list grew through our use of our target structures: *to donate*, *to fundraise*, *to help*. Their proficiency was strengthened by producing language in a real-world context.

These kids saw a need and wanted to meet it; Spanish had a real purpose in this discussion!

We settled on an in-class snack shop. The kids sold donuts, snacks, and our local soft drink, Ski, for \$1 each. For them, the \$1 price point was representative of a day's wages in Guatemala. They advertised the fundraiser by creating signs in Spanish, full of cognates so that everyone could read them, which they displayed all over the school.

With the HOW of our fundraising decided, we needed to focus on a WHO. Kristy Placido from Michigan had done a successful fundraiser for the project, "Dump the Dump," in Antigua, Guatemala. This organization provides hot meals and an education to students whose families live in and off the city dump. Our first 2-week snack shop raised over \$1,000! I was proud of the students, but more importantly, they felt like they had accomplished something very significant. They had sent several kids to school.

Kylah McCord, one of the student leaders of our global giving initiative shares: "What made me want to start raising money for the kids in Guatemala that don't have clean drinking water or healthy food was that I had everything they didn't have. Spending \$1 a day on a donut or a soda was not going to mean that I didn't get fresh drinking water for a week. We take too many things for granted. I could spend my money on something that is meaningful rather than something not worth buying!"

Because the kids showed a lot of interest in the topic of poverty in Guatemala, I added a film study of the documentary, *Living on One Dollar*, which chronicles the lives of four friends who spend 8 weeks living on \$1 a day in Guatemala. They learned about microfinance loans and how families in Peña Blanca, Guatemala, are using them to earn a livable wage for their families. We reopened the snack shop for 2 weeks and were able to send \$1,000 to the Living on One campaign as well.

This unit was the most powerful I have ever taught. The kids were excited about using their language in a meaningful way, they were excited that what they were doing in our small town was bringing about change 2,000 miles away, and they were hungry for more.

As the year wound down, I began to think about how I could plan for more experiences like this. The new year would be an opportunity to redesign my curriculum. Were there other ways that I could expose my students to global giving?

In the summer, I made some local giving connections for the new school year. I tried out a technique that I learned from Gaab, president of TPRS Publishing: I brought in a human authentic resource (an "authres"). Each year, the Mustard Seed Peace Project, headquartered an hour from our school, brings an indigenous leader, Rubén Dario Gómez from Chichicastenango, Guatemala, to speak to area schools and organizations. Gómez spent an entire day sharing his life in Guatemala with my students. He even dressed the girls up like women from his village! At the end of the day, my students donated snack shop money to help the children in his village attend school.

Since his visit, our Classroom Without Walls initiative has exploded. In Spanish IV, we connected with the Bernie Project in Uganda, Africa, and its founder, April Gulley. Gulley's organization is built on the motto: "It Starts with One"—a motto we have adopted for our class as well. It only takes one person to affect many; Gulley is living proof. She left her job and home to live in Uganda and make a difference in the lives of the children of Wakiso School of Hope.

I planned a unit called, "Water is Life," which focused on finding a practical solution to the problem of unclean water at the Ugandan school. My students researched waterborne illnesses and types of filtration. As the summative unit assessment, they created public service announcements in which they outlined the need for filtration at the Wakiso School of Hope and proposed a solution to the problem. At the end of the unit, they shared what they had learned with the school and reopened the snack shop. In 1 week, they raised the \$750 necessary to purchase a filtration system that will serve the 250 students at the school for 5 years.

The Spanish III class was a little envious of the attention the Spanish IV group got after the local paper covered their fundraising success. Because they wanted to help the school

as well, I designed a unit called: "Eat to Live or Live to Eat." Throughout the unit, they compared the way we eat in the United States with the way the students of the Wakiso school eat. We looked at the school menu and compared it with the menu the Bernie Project wanted to implement: a menu richer in fruits, proteins, and vegetables. Spanish III planned a donation-based pizza party where they raised \$350, enough to provide a high-quality diet for one student for 1 year.

On a trip to the United States, Gulley visited my classes and shared her experiences in Uganda. Another successful human authres, she shared pictures of the projects we had already helped implement and pictures of some future projects that my students are excited to help with, like a school library and a more modern kitchen area.

McKenzie Magnus, a Spanish IV student, remembers, "After April [Gulley] talked to our class about Wakiso School and all of the challenges they face on a daily basis, I realized that the things they need the most, such as food and water, are things that we take for granted. Getting the opportunity to help the students of Wakiso School has positively impacted my life as much as it has theirs."

Our classrooms are not contained by four walls. What creates a real love for language learning in our rooms often exists outside of our classroom space. While the idea for global giving came from my students, it has become a passion of mine, a passion I am happy to share with other teachers.

Carrie Toth is a Spanish teacher at Carlyle High School, Carlyle, Illinois.



Learn More

Bernie Project: It Starts With One
www.thebernieproject.org

Living on One
www.livingonone.org

The Pulsera Project: Color the World
www.thepulseraproject.org

Mustard Seed Peace Project
www.mustardseedpeaceproject.org



BY MANUEL NUÑEZ

Photos: Fabian Bejarano

In 2009, our school—Flintridge Preparatory School (www.flintridgeprep.org), a coed independent school with 500 students in grades 7–12 located near Los Angeles—was looking for ways to extend the student experience beyond the classroom. The school, which boasts a strong academic program, had created a balanced educational experience that features human development programs, peer counseling, and community impact opportunities, but the administration wanted to go even further outside our gates.

I am a native of Nicaragua and have taught Spanish for nearly three decades, with 20+ years at Prep. During that time I had led occasional trips to Managua with commercial companies, but I knew the school was looking for something deeper than just a visit to the country. Ideally, our students would learn Spanish while making enduring connections with individuals, a country, and a culture.

With support from the school administration, I spent a year creating a 3-week exchange for a carefully selected, small group of motivated, advanced Spanish students. Building on my family connections, I worked with an alumna who was teaching in Managua, and finally created an exchange program with Lincoln Academy School for the summer of 2010 and the winter of 2011. Host families from both schools were recruited, the Prep students went to school with their “brothers and sisters,” and the Nicaraguan students visited our families the next winter.

Before the trip, I met with Prep students and faculty for one evening after they had been accepted into the program to go over Nicaraguan customs, which tend to be more formal than American. I told them that for adult men, the custom is that they do not wear shorts in public; I also encouraged them to feel the impact of wearing long pants in 95° F heat and humidity. We spent a long time on how to be politely formal with host families who, as they say in Nicaragua, *sacar la casa por la ventana* (literally “throw the house outside the window,” meaning “do everything to make people feel welcome”) for guests. Students learned that they should be appreciative and polite with everyone and offer to help as part of the family. They were also told not to make comparisons with their circumstances at home, but to embrace the differences, relax, and enjoy the warmth of the culture.

The first year was a success: The students from both countries learned just what we had hoped in terms of culture and language. But an amazing thing happened that—thanks to one student’s passion—has driven our program ever since and has set the tone for everything else that has followed.

The learning portion of our program is still important, but the service portion has grown tremendously and authentically as students and faculty offer their talents throughout the city of Managua. We are striving to not be a group of “parachute volunteers,” but to instead develop and maintain significant relationships that enrich

and support existing needs in Nicaragua. And we were inspired to go in this direction by a student our very first year.

Our school connection, Lincoln Academy, had a relationship with a pediatric hospital, La Mascota, that is also Nicaragua's only cancer treatment center for children. Then-junior Naomi Hatanaka '11, fluent in and passionate about Spanish, was sincerely touched by the plight of the families at La Mascota, who often must give up work for weeks or months to help their children endure hospital-based cancer therapies. Hatanaka went on to use her senior year independent study project to create a non-profit, A World of One's Own or AWOOO (aworldofonesown.weebly.com/about-us.html), for the La Mascota patients and their families, growing what was a short visit into a lasting connection. Three years later, the organization thrives, and she continues to advocate and raise funds, involving former classmates as well as current students. Not surprisingly, she is majoring in social entrepreneurship at UC Berkeley (and minoring in Hindi).

The pediatric hospital and its families continue to inspire students. "I could see a generosity and sweetness, watching our high school students engage with these kids [at La Mascota] who were really sick," observes Flintridge Prep history teacher Ingrid Herskind, who has been to Nicaragua twice. "They were there in the afternoons, hanging out, playing cards, taking pictures and basically just loving these kids. It was absolutely genuine interaction and support, impassioned and from the heart."

Prep's Novice-High to Intermediate-High level Spanish students plunge into dialogue immediately with patients and families and have their language skills validated right away. The project facilitates easy, genuine interaction that makes true connection possible.

On our 2012 trip, Abby Letts '13 spent every hot, humid day renovating the derelict, abandoned game room at the hospital. She was the first one to grab a hammer in the morning and the last one to leave at night: She took it upon herself to leave something good behind.

Today, working with La Mascota is such a vital part of what Flintridge Prep students do in Nicaragua that students are required to visit with local pediatric cancer patients during the school year to familiarize themselves with the conditions they may encounter in

Nicaragua, when they can only use Spanish. The idea is to help minimize some of the feelings of being overwhelmed by "so much" so that students can be much more present with the patients at La Mascota by already being comfortable in a hospital setting.

The school administration was impressed by the commitment and passion demonstrated in the first year and how it continued to impact students' lives. Prep had received a multi-year grant from the EE Ford Foundation to foster unique extracurricular programs, and provided some funding so we could expand the program, bringing faculty exchanges and professional development into what we now call The Nicaragua Initiative.

We found a Managua school, the Colegio Bilingüe St. Mary, a K–9 institution that was excited to partner with us. St. Mary has a mission and ambition similar to Flintridge Prep's, and the relationship now includes students and faculty in both countries in an ongoing exchange of mentoring, learning, and teaching.

On our current summer program, Flintridge Prep students live for 2 weeks with selected families from St. Mary and spend mornings at the school. Founded just 5 years ago, St. Mary has already grown to 500 students and is known for its outreach programs. Flintridge Prep students are encouraged as much to learn as to teach, working in a classroom with elementary students and taking both Spanish and dance. Last year's dance program was a surprising way into cultural understanding. They were enthusiastic about learning and excited to show appreciation to their host families with an all-school performance.

"I was immersed in real, genuine Nicaraguan culture, staying with a wonderful family who welcomed me and treated me more like a son or a cousin than a foreign exchange student," says JD Papanikolas '15. "My Spanish improved vastly as I spoke only in Spanish at home and mostly in Spanish at the school and hospital. I mostly participated in everyday Nicaraguan activities, like going to the market, the community pool, and the mall, or visiting relatives and watching TV."

"It was great to learn along with the kids we taught," points out Michael Weinstein '14. "I was in a first grade classroom with one of my 'younger brothers.' The kids spoke so fast, we had to step up—and we learned

Advice on Starting an International Initiative

- **Begin with the connections you already have.** Making a connection in a country where you have no ties is an uphill battle. By understanding the culture, and making frequent visits, we overcame these struggles.
- **Start small, and pick your most enthusiastic students.** Our first trip had only five students, but they were the most passionately invested students we could choose. Students continue to go through a rigorous application process in order to participate.
- **Be organic.** By never saying no, our efforts went in unanticipated directions. This open and organic process also helped us prevent culture shock for students and avoid the pitfall of being "ugly Americans" who come to a country to save it.
- **Align your ideas with your school's mission.** Getting buy-in from the administration wasn't hard because our efforts were in line with the institutional goals of creating globally aware students and faculty.
- **Get creative with funding.** Grants can assist in supporting the expense of a long-term program, especially faculty expenses. The grant Prep received is able to support about five faculty every summer, who are much more than chaperones; they are bringing their expertise and working hard!
- **The biggest costs for students are airfare.** They pay \$1,200 to participate in the 3-week program (roundtrip airfare from Los Angeles to Nicaragua is approximately \$800–900 each). We pay a small stipend to Nicaraguan families who host our students.
- **Technology is your friend.** Once relationships are established, both students and adults can keep momentum and interest going by communicating often.

a lot of slang. It was very important to my development as a Spanish speaker. While there, we were completely immersed in the culture and language, giving us no option but to fully embrace both. We were truly fluent . . . But the best part is learning about a culture while truly experiencing it in a language that fascinates you.”

Shaneli Jain '14 says her trip was *inolvidable* (unforgettable). “I began to think in Spanish, after playing the role of teacher as well as student at St. Mary, and speaking Spanish exclusively with my host family, helping make smoothies at their café, watching a movie in the plaza, or reading stories to my little brother before bed. When I got back home to LA, I forgot that English is the dominant language here!” she says.

Students clearly benefit from the exchange, and for the faculty in both countries, it has become a terrific learning experience. Prep teachers from technology, science, history, and physical education have made the trip along with students who apply for an opportunity to participate. Each year, we have extended our connection and involvement with the Nicaraguan community. It is not a visit; it's an ongoing investment for both schools that continues throughout the year.

For Flintridge Prep's Nicaragua Initiative, we recruit student and faculty participants who have a genuine interest in going, who will come back with something that just might change their minds, and who will look at themselves and the world in a different way. The minimum academic requirement for students is completion of Spanish 3, so participants are certainly not tourists. Host families treat them like a member because they understand the language and we find our students can negotiate just about any situation.

The “aha” moments, like Abby Letts grabbing a hammer and just getting to work, can occur anywhere, because the students are primed for success in another country. I have taught Spanish to each student in the program for at least a year, and, like all Flintridge Prep's world language teachers, incorporate the 5 Cs in my curriculum. Since the program is now well-established, it is not a matter of recruitment. Instead, students apply because they have heard good things

from other students. Out of 100 students taking Spanish 3, about 35 apply each year for the 14-student program.

Flintridge Prep and St. Mary now have a true partnership based upon a mutual respect for and appreciation of each other. St. Mary offers Prep the experience of being in Nicaragua and we offer them, thanks to the grant, professional expertise and support. Ultimately, it is for the betterment of all of our students and faculty; we can all be better global citizens.

The faculty side of the exchange changes from year to year. Flintridge Prep science teacher Heather Clark taught environmental studies (in Spanish) for Grades 1–8 while St. Mary teachers observed her technique. Flintridge Prep Spanish teacher Fabian Bejarano worked with St. Mary Spanish teacher Jimena Gonzalez. In the 2013–2014 school year, students at both schools have been using iPads to connect Flintridge Prep's Spanish I classes to seventh and eighth grade English classrooms at St. Mary.

Alex Rivera, Flintridge Prep's long-time Athletic Director, visited Nicaragua for the first time in 2013 and taught sports clinics for coaches and players in the summer and the subsequent winter. Rivera was putting building blocks in place to help St. Mary's director, Jorge Luis Ayestas, pursue his dream of making the country of Nicaragua a basketball powerhouse, and ultimately an Olympic contender in the sport.

In the summer of 2014, with help from the U.S. Embassy and its sports diplomacy program, we partnered with a public school, Escuela de Jinotepe, to teach both soccer and softball camps with faculty and students.

Flintridge Prep's Nicaragua Initiative has become so ingrained into the school culture that even those not directly involved with it have jumped on board. For the last 2 years our campus has been undergoing a major classroom and lab renovation. So the school packed up its original lab stations, chairs, and tables into a giant container and shipped them to the Nicaraguan school. Now, St. Mary boasts one of Nicaragua's finest science labs.

Everyone on campus knows about La Mascota, and we have penny wars, churro

sales, used book sales, and sponsored walks to raise money for patients there all year round.

In September 2013, Ayestas and Karla Obregon, St. Mary academic coordinator, came to California, using Prep's grant money, to observe many facets of Flintridge Prep in action. They visited classrooms, interviewed teachers and administrators, and absorbed the day-to-day workings of the school.

During the visit, Ayestas kept clasping his fingers together, illustrating how intertwined Flintridge Prep and St. Mary are, through our missions, honor codes, and continuing student and faculty exchange.

Everyone involved sees this project as a two-way street: a *compromiso* (a union). St. Mary is excited to be mentored by Flintridge Prep and they want to expand to high school, to be one of the best schools in their country, and to offer an excellent education to people in the lower and lower middle classes. They are aiming for nothing less than developing the educational well-being of their entire country, to help their country prosper. They really “throw the house out of the window” to welcome us, and we try to do the same for them here.

Yet in many ways, we are receiving much more than we are giving. Our students come home with profound understanding of another culture, they are more self-assured, and they can handle things better across the board. They have been transformed.

Individual students showed us the way this program could work; support for faculty exchange deepened the professional growth part of the initiative that has really become significant. Now that our personal relationships have been cemented through visits and exchanges, we keep communicating, through technology, dreaming up big plans for the future. As we say in Nicaragua, “*no hay mal que por bien no venga*” (even through a struggle, we continue), and we look forward to deeper connections in the coming years.

Manuel Nuñez is a Spanish teacher and Global Studies Liaison at Flintridge Preparatory School, La Cañada, California.

School-to-School Partnerships in the Community



BY DOUGLASS CROUSE

Taking language beyond the classroom can mean crossing distant borders or exploring previously unknown worlds online. But it can also start simply, amid the familiar, at home.

At the local level, addressing the Communities goal area takes many forms: one class walking down the hallway to chat with another; a group of high school seniors driving across town to offer language lessons to kindergarteners; students joining forces with native speakers in a neighborhood cause; or a single, globe-trotting graduate who connects her hometown school with the larger world.

The results of such partnerships—and the ripples they produce in participants' lives—can be profound.

For Parthena Draggett, community building that combines language, culture, and service has the power to show students the relevance of what they are learning in school. Draggett, chair of the world language department at Jackson High School in Massillon, OH, pairs some of her Advanced Placement Spanish students with elementary teachers to help children who come to the district with limited English. Others help interpret in meetings with parents. And, in a thread common in many other district partnerships, all her Spanish Honor Society members learn to teach, passing their language of study on to younger pupils in the district.

Such roles often prove life-changing, Draggett says. “I had a boy who was kind of lackadaisical about Spanish and school in general, but I needed some students at an elementary school and he was among those chosen,” she recalls. “That student blossomed tremen-

dously through the experience. He’s a college student now and went to Spain to study.”

Successful school and community partnerships rely on rigorous planning—both for the service learning experiences themselves and for the opportunities for reflection that organizers say must necessarily follow. Teachers who spearhead such programs call them deeply rewarding. But they require support from the school community and organizers’ personal time, flexibility, and often their personal funds to become reality. “We have to think outside the box and not just teach inside the walls of the classroom,” says Draggett. “Does it take extra effort on the part of the teacher? Yes. But those efforts are worth it, especially when they address a school or community need.”

Last year, more than 60 Jackson High students brought after-school Spanish lessons to students in Grades 2 through 5 at four elementary schools. Families pay \$20 for five 1-hour lessons over 5 weeks. Without that exposure, the younger students’ first chance to learn Spanish would come in sixth grade.

“At first I wanted it to be totally volunteer, but interest grew,” Draggett says. “The intent was to be a service but we also didn’t want it to be a babysitting arrangement. So [at the principals’ request], we started charging a small fee. Even with that, we’re attracting tons of kids.” Most years have averaged about 300 elementary-age participants, with the fees going toward college scholarships.

Jessica Cassidy had a special responsibility. As a senior AP Spanish student last year, she volunteered to help two new arrivals learn English: a kindergartener from Puerto Rico

and a first grader from Mexico who initially balked at speaking his new language. “But that helped me with my Spanish and to build my experience, because I was learning from him as much as he was from me,” Cassidy recalls. “It all made me love the language even more.”

Now 17, Cassidy once imagined that, after her required two years of Spanish, she’d be done with it. But she pushed on, even after sitting through the first day of her Level 3 class with Señora Draggett without hearing a word of English. “I thought, I can’t continue this class. I can’t understand what she’s saying,” Cassidy says. “But I stuck with it and started catching on and realized: I can do this.”

This summer, as she prepares for fall classes at Kent State University, Cassidy is tutoring an eighth and ninth grader in Spanish. But it’s her choice of double major—global communication study and Spanish translation—that best reveals how far she’s come. “We all need to try to bring wider awareness about how interconnected the world is becoming,” she says, “and languages are such a huge part of those connections.”

That’s a sentiment close to the heart of Gisela Nina Holmquist. A school partnership pioneer, Holmquist arrived at Nicolet High School in Wisconsin in 1982. Three years later, she organized the school’s first canned-food drive for primarily Hispanic families in the poorer, south section of Milwaukee, filling five boxes with community contributions.

The program quickly took off, with honors language students ultimately teaming up with the district’s four middle and six elementary schools. “It soon was no longer a language thing but a school thing,”



Holmquist says, with schools competing to see which could donate more food.

Now retired, she ran the program for 20 of the 29 years she worked at Nicolet. The drive continues today, with Spanish 4 Honors students holding a collection each November on behalf of the Council for the Spanish Speaking, a Latino social services group in Milwaukee. On average, the drive brings in nearly 30,000 food items and \$5,000 in donations, with many of the honors students using their Spanish to help distribute the food items, says Nicolet teacher and National Spanish Honor Society chapter advisor Samuel Cox.

In another program that began during Holmquist's tenure, Nicolet also encourages upper-level language students to serve as tutors at district middle schools. "This eases the burden on the middle school teachers as they are able to 'divide-and-conquer'" to help students most in need, says Cox. "It also provides the middle school students with positive role models in Spanish and lets them see the possibilities of how far they can progress in the language if they keep at it."

For many student leaders, service learning and community building don't end after graduation. Holmquist recalls two Nicolet grads who moved on without cutting ties: Becca Klaver, a former student and now published poet, joined AmeriCorps VISTA in

the early 2000s and invited Nicolet students to tutor at an elementary and middle school where she worked in a Latino section of Milwaukee. Among the roles they took on was deepening the younger students' Spanish skills. Says Klaver: "They could understand a lot, but didn't know how to read and write in Spanish, which is what I could do well, so it was a nice match. The Nicolet students were really helpful in that way, too."

Another graduate, Lisa Fink, approached Nicolet's Spanish Honor Society about the need for potable water in the village in El Salvador where she was serving as a Peace Corps volunteer. With \$15,000 raised largely by the high school community and Fink's synagogue, village residents were able to dig a well and install a water distribution system—and in so doing, to create a tangible link between two far-flung communities.

Gisela Dieter and Ana Maria Caula had less distance to travel to find a service learning opportunity for their teacher candidates at Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania. Caula, chair of the Modern Languages and Cultures Department, and Assistant Professor of Spanish Dieter created a course in which their students give lessons at the university's child care center based on Spanish-language children's books.

During the first half of the semester, teacher candidates explore different genres

of children's literature from the Spanish-speaking world and how each reflects elements of culture. They also design and test lessons that, for example, introduce key words and phrases using gestures, then present the text of the story in Spanish and English. In the second half of the course, they take turns running classes at the child care center and observing one another's methods. A class devoted to reflection in Spanish follows, with presenters ultimately required to post detailed self-evaluations online.

For the preschoolers, the experience is often their first in-depth exposure to Spanish and its cultures. "When we see parents, they mention things their children come home talking about and how they look forward to the next stories," Dieter says. "The preschool uses these experiences as a way to interest and attract parents. They understand the earlier you start language study the better."

Dieter and Caula hope to expand their program into the surrounding district, where Dieter says students don't begin studying a world language until ninth grade. "This could be a venue for the local board to realize it would be beneficial to offer languages at the earlier grades," she says.

At duPont Manual High School in Louisville, KY, Ana Castro is also in the business of inspiring future teachers—although



LEFT: Participants in last year's "Capitalizing on Global Opportunities Night," an annual event organized by members of Jackson High School's community advisory board. The board brings together world language students, members of the local business community, and faculty from the high school and nearby colleges. **CENTER:** A teacher candidate works with young students in Slippery Rock, PA. **RIGHT:** Students at Jackson High School giving after-school Spanish lessons to elementary students in the district.



Share your answer to this question in TLE Online at www.thelanguageeducator.org.
What are your strategies for connecting your learners to an application of their language skills in the local community?



not necessarily teachers of Spanish. The lessons her Spanish 5 seniors script, fine-tune, and ultimately deliver focus on math and science. In the partnership between the dual language immersion students at Hawthorne Elementary School and her seniors, it's simply understood that those lessons will be in Spanish.

Castro calls the experience an "internship." And indeed, for some in her college-bound crowd, standing for the first time at the front of a classroom proves revelatory.

"So often, kids don't know what they want to do in their lives," Castro says. "Many seniors, after doing this, say 'I want to be a teacher.' Or, 'I might not want to be a teacher, but I know now I want to work with kids.' There are also those who say, 'I never want to have kids!' But whatever the case, they come through it changed."

Retired Spanish teacher Diana Taylor created the program 10 years ago, and Castro, who's also a certified science teacher, has been running the show for the past 4. It's no small commitment. Castro devotes much of her free time to planning and shells out her own money for materials. Transportation is also tricky. Students teach at Hawthorne during the school day and, until now, have driven themselves, have ridden over with parents, or have caught a ride with Castro. Parents sign consent forms, Castro says, "but even so, there was concern about kids driving during school hours. What would be the district's liability if something happened? No one really had an answer." Castro may turn to buses this year, but is concerned about covering the cost. "I just wish everyone could come to class and see this program for themselves," Castro says.

Here's how it works: Two weeks before each scheduled visit, Hawthorne teachers send the topics and objectives for that day. Castro subdivides the subjects and assigns each to a group of her students, then finds some initial resources to get them started. Students do the bulk of their planning at home—on top of regular classwork—and at times they buy materials on their own.

They then present their lessons in class and offer one another candid critiques before getting graded on their final lessons at Hawthorne. Some may lack sufficient structure.

Castro takes photos: Are the younger students engaged or distracted? Other lessons might wind down too early. Most, however, succeed, she says. At the end comes a lengthy classroom discussion of what went well and how to improve, along with written reflections by each participant.

In a school with a two-year language requirement, Castro routinely attracts enough students for two sections. "If we have to cancel a lesson day because of bad weather, the students will say, 'No, Señora, can we reschedule?' I teach them how to be teachers, and they put their hearts into what they do."

Jake Sims recalls feeling some anxiety on the drive to Hawthorne for his first lesson more than four years ago. But his confidence grew once he started speaking Spanish with his young pupils.

He and his team taught four lessons that year, being careful to bone up on each science and math topic well enough to field any questions that might arise. "It had to be pretty fine-tuned by the time we went to Hawthorne because any dead time or loss in structure and you lose the kids," he recalls. "It was definitely a challenge, especially in Spanish. But speaking at the level of vocabulary of the students was helpful in putting us all on the same playing field."

His vocabulary has only grown since then. Now a University of South Carolina junior with a minor in Spanish and triple major in international business, economics, and global supply chain and operations management, Sims sets out for Santiago, Chile, next March to begin a year-long study program with a full course load in Spanish.

Giving students the chance to apply internationally the language and intercultural skills they have developed locally is a goal that service learning programs share. At Jackson High School, world language students begin to make that transition through a community advisory board that unites faculty members, students, community members, representatives from global businesses with local offices, and educators from local colleges.

Board discussions often center on careers where language skills and cultural understanding are important, and the insights sometimes feed into curriculum decisions, Draggett says.

Guest speakers have visited from corporations including The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. and Diebold Inc., and an employee from Merrill Lynch & Co. with roots in Nicaragua and Spain is planning a student trip this year to New York City's financial sector.

In its signature event, a board subcommittee has organized a global opportunities night each fall for the last 4 years. This November, Draggett hopes to add an online chat component and to invite Jackson graduates to highlight how language and culture have figured into their careers.

Karl Xia is among those who served on the board. As president of the Spanish Honor Society during the 2011–2012 school year, he also coordinated the Spanish lessons at Jackson High and helped educate parents about the program's benefits. Now enrolled at Yale University, Xia's outreach continues. He and a group of fellow students offer free tax preparation services to Hispanic residents in New Haven, using Spanish-language media outlets to advertise their work. For Xia, that included an interview on one of Univision's local morning talk shows.

He has even found a way to combine his passions for languages and soccer. A club team captain at Yale, he and other players often hang out with students at a K–8 magnet school in New Haven, splitting their time between academics and athletics: "We teach math one weekend and . . . soccer the next," he says. "It's a good way to let the kids know that they have a supportive college in their backyard."

When service learning proponents witness young people such as Xia continuing to live out the spirit of the Communities Standards as adults, it reaffirms a core belief, Draggett says: "When we show students that they can be valuable to others and make a difference in others' lives, that's very powerful to them. Maybe they've never had that experience that what they've learned can make such a difference for someone else. That awareness can allow them to truly see the value of language learning and reawaken their interest in learning in general."

Douglass Crouse is a contributing writer to The Language Educator. He also teaches French at Sparta Middle School in Sparta, New Jersey.

Across the Curriculum and into the Community

BY DEB REISINGER



5K Race for Refugees



Celebrating July 4th

com·mu·ni·ty: \kə-'myü-nə-tē\

: a group of people who live in the same area (such as a city, town, or neighborhood)

: a group of people who have the same interests, religion, race, etc.

—MERRIAM-WEBSTER DICTIONARY

I don't think you can really understand global health until you understand the culture, the language, the people, the environment in which they live. It's been a very different experience to learn about the issues and to connect them to our new friends, as opposed to just names on a paper, stories in the news, or links online.

—STUDENT ENROLLED IN
FRENCH GLOBAL HEALTH SERVICE-LEARNING COURSE

Voices in Global Health is part of a Cultures and Languages Across the Curriculum (CLAC) initiative at Duke University—one that gives students the opportunity to use their language skills in the context of their major or minor area of study. One of the hallmarks of the CLAC initiative (www.clacconsortium.org) is that it develops meaningful, content-based language outside a traditional language program. Our half-credit courses are backward-designed, learner-centered, and community-based, designed to foster a student's critical thinking and intercultural competence related to issues surrounding global health disparities, interventions, and solutions. To date, we have offered these courses in French and Spanish, and we will be extending our offerings to include Hindi, Mandarin, and Arabic next year.

In the course's first iteration in fall 2012, the French section attempted to develop the Communities Standards by partnering with

an online fee-based educational platform that allowed our students to practice their French through Skype conversations with native speakers. These exchanges gave students important insight into health care issues from the perspective of communities of practice: We spoke to a man from Dakar who shared his country's efforts to combat diabetes, and we learned of the challenges of developing AIDS awareness campaigns from a young Moroccan who spoke of the shame surrounding the disease.

These conversations engaged students deeply by connecting them with real, rather than imagined, Francophone communities, and they helped shape our understanding of the cultural challenges that global health workers face. As students pushed through linguistic breakdowns to create meaningful dialogue with their partners, they learned that they could communicate effectively, if imperfectly, and they began to exhibit signs of intercultural competency in their interactions. While they engaged enthusiastically with these communities, the virtual nature of their interactions necessarily limited their participation in them.

In late 2013, an opportunity presented itself that would take our course in a very different direction. We learned that a significant and growing number of refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) would be settled in

our city of Durham, NC. After reaching out to our refugee settlement agency, which was eager to pair French-speaking volunteers with their clients, we redesigned our course to respond to the needs of this diverse refugee community. Our spring 2014 Voices in Global Health course would no longer include just virtual voices, but instead local individuals and their families, allowing us the opportunity to both participate in and help shape our own community.

To prepare our students for their community partnership experience, we invited our partner agency's refugee coordinator to give a guest lecture at the beginning of the semester. She shared important information about how an individual seeks asylum and refugee status, about the services her organization offers, and about the challenges that newly arrived refugees often face. We learned that there are over 15.4 million refugees in the world (www.unhcr.org) and that approximately 50,000 Congolese will be resettled in the next 5 years, a great majority of whom will come to the United States (www.state.gov/jfprm/index.htm).

Students began their work in the community by observing an English as a second language class regularly attended by a number of area refugees. After submitting written feedback about their experience, they examined their reactions collectively, noting the teaching strategies used by the instructor, who spoke none of his students' native languages. This hands-on experience helped students grasp the reality of the day-to-day challenges that refugees face, and it also helped prepare them for the kinds of conversational skills they would develop over the next several months.

Next, students were paired with refugee clients who had expressed an interest in working with a student volunteer. Pairs of students were asked to participate in at least five meetings with their partners over the remainder of the semester and to write reflectively about their experiences. Together, we visited their homes to introduce them to one another, and from then on, students were expected to arrange all future meetings (often on weekends), to travel to their partner's home (by bus or shared ride), and to assess and reflect upon shifting needs (logistical, cultural, linguistic). While transportation and meeting logistics proved challenging for everyone's busy schedule, students agreed that it was worthwhile to meet clients at their homes. As one student wrote: "By traveling to other people's apartments, I learned their lives were not so different from my own, but also to appreciate what I have. I could have never learned this in a classroom."

Over the next 8 weeks, students continued to meet with their partners. Interactions took various forms, often depending on the age and gender of their partners; some invited their like-aged partners to campus sporting events, while others created arts and crafts activities for children. And while English conversation was often the stated purpose of these exchanges, conversations more often than not turned to French, and they centered around U.S. cultural norms and practices, from basic banking and cell phone usage to navigating the school system. Students commented over and over on the development of their translanguing and transcultural skills, and the challenge of navigating two—and sometimes three—languages and cultures at once.

As one said, "Our exchanges helped open my eyes about French across different cultures, and different kinds of French that are spoken. While I often made mistakes in my French or stumbled for words, [my partners] always understood what I was generally trying to say. It was a good way to learn to adapt what I was saying to get my meaning across, and a confidence-builder." Another expressed, "I made a real breakthrough when I was able to joke with Pierre and Paul, and our exchanges went beyond a professional relationship and became personal—therefore much more effective."

Mapping expectations on reality became a source of much discussion and reflection, as was the question of how to manage this "in-between" space they were inhabiting: Were they volunteers or were they friends? Some students were surprised by the personal information that was disclosed to them, and many talked about the intimacy that they developed as they shared their dreams for the future. The students seemed struck by how much they actually shared in common with their new friends—they agreed, they had developed friendships—and this was when I knew we were developing a real community.

Towards the end of the semester, we decided to host a party and invite all of our new friends. Students tried their hand at making *fufu*, a pounded starch dish common in West Africa, and together they all planted flowers to beautify the apartment grounds. Our afternoon was topped off with an impromptu soccer game with neighborhood kids joining in the fun.

"As we played, some other residents came out," noted one student. "The new refugee who just arrived 2 weeks ago eventually asked to play jump rope with us. This moment was a breakthrough for me because it was a moment when we switched from being volunteers to truly being friends and part of a community in which the refugees felt comfortable and happy."

By adding a real community to our class, our academic goals were deeply enriched. "Seeing from the perspective of others allowed me to understand problems not only from an academic standpoint, but also from a personal one, allowing me to really see the challenges others face," added another.

Students developed empathy, flexibility, and humility—all hallmarks of intercultural competency—and truly grasped the usefulness of their language study because they were needed. One student wrote in her final reflection:

I initially took the class because I wanted to practice my French skills and connect with the Durham community. Not only have I done those things throughout the semester, but I've also learned a lot about myself through my relationship with Fatimata and her family. I've experienced a unique sense of humility that I wasn't expecting as I recognized that we have more in common with refugees than we may realize—it has very much influenced me in a positive way, as well as my decision to add a major in French!

Deb Reisinger is a lecturer in French at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.



BY FRANCIS J. TROYAN AND LAURENT CAMMARATA

Finding the Lost C:

Community Learning Partnerships Through Expeditionary Learning

Over the past decade, service learning has received increased attention. For example, the Communities goal area of the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages—"the Lost C" as it was called in a session at the 2010 ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo—has been the focus of much recent discussion in the profession. Given that much of the documented work has taken place at the university level, instructional frameworks for explicitly linking learning to language communities in K–12 foreign language education are overdue.

Expeditionary learning is an effective way to operationalize the Communities and Connections goal areas of the 5 Cs through investigations that view the community as a vital component of learning and organize learning experiences with the community as the focus of instruction.

Expeditionary learning is an approach to planning and instruction that can facilitate what Annie Abbott and Darcy Lear referred to as "concrete social action" in their 2010 article, *The Connections Goal Area in Spanish Community Service-Learning: Possibilities and Limitations*. Through an example French unit, which took place partly in a New England Franco-American community, expeditionary learning is presented here as one

approach to instruction in K–12 foreign language education that goes beyond simply promoting social action outside the language classroom to explicitly integrating social action into the language curriculum.

Service Learning as Social Action

Research on service learning in postsecondary language education has found that when students participated in service learning projects, their motivation to learn languages increased (e.g., Nelson & Scott, 2008) and an awareness of the language learning process developed (e.g., Polansky et al., 2010). Building on earlier work by Lucía Varona One, Abbott and Lear (2010) argued for a third Connections standard particular to service learning that builds on the notion of social action—which may be at the heart of service learning but is not always realized in such projects.

Abbott and Lear described two components to social action in service learning: efficacy and commitment. Efficacy involves the willingness to be involved and requires risk taking beyond the classroom on the part of the student. Commitment refers to engaged community involvement. These aspects of social action are defined in the community service learning literature as the engaged citizen behavior expected of

college graduates. Despite this promising work at the university level, descriptions of such innovative practice at the K–12 level are rare. In K–12 contexts, social action through service learning facilitates the development of the type of cultural literacy, global awareness, curiosity, and risk taking that are valued in educational standards, namely those described by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (www.p21.org). Expeditionary learning is a framework that allows teachers to address critical aspects of these educational standards.

Expeditionary Learning and Social Action

Expeditionary learning is an approach in which curriculum revolves around learning expeditions—long-term, in-depth studies of a single topic that explore vital guiding questions; incorporate standards; involve fieldwork; and culminate in a project, product, or performance.

Imagine the following scenario for a Grade 10 interdisciplinary Science expedition: A 10th-grade team plans an expedition with a science focus entitled *Got Flu?* The team’s humanities (English and social studies combined), science, math, and wellness teachers co-create integrated learning experiences that lead up to a culminating event, for which students will work with the Minority Health Division of the city’s Department of Health to develop posters about avian flu for the city’s language minority populations. The work of all content areas on the team contributes to the final product.

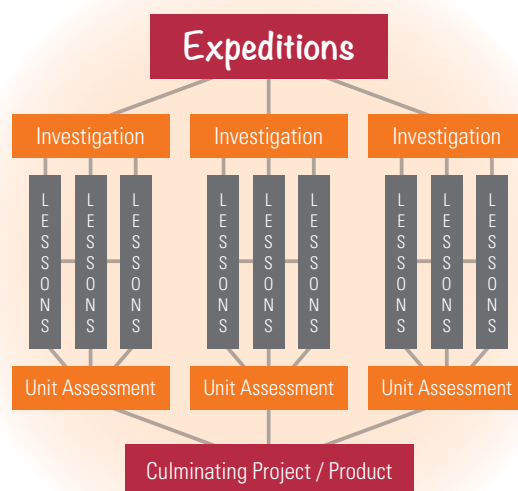
In the implementation of expeditionary learning design, learning follows a logical path that begins with immersion and ends with the presentation of the final product at the culminating event. Student learning evolves through several phases during an expedition that results in some action within and service to the community.

Core Components of an Expedition

Four key phases comprise the work of an expedition: (1) immersion; (2) building background knowledge; (3) investigation; and (4) culmination. Through immersion, students are immersed in a topic to get a sense of its breadth and depth. Students find immediate engagement through mystery texts, gallery walks, and fieldwork. In the building background knowledge phase, students deepen and refine their knowledge of a subject in order to address a guiding question. Through primary sources, fieldwork, experts, and case studies, students expand their knowledge base of the topic under investigation.

In the investigation phase, students—independently or in small groups—develop expertise on a specific sub-topic that provides an answer to their guiding question. All the work of the expedition leads to culmination, in which students, along with teachers, parents, and community stakeholders, gather together to share their understanding in an authentic, meaningful way. Culminating events usually have a presentation component designed to include those impacted by the results of the students’ exploration. The products shared address a need, offer solutions, and give back to the community. In addition, reflection plays an important role in the learning process in the expedition. Along the way, students reflect on their learning. They consider how they are learning and the broader application of the guiding questions. After the culminating event, students close the expedition by reviewing all of the

Organization of an Expedition



Connections to the Community

The project described on p. 44 involved the following **individuals** and **organizations**:

A) The **Franco-American Heritage Center** in Lewiston—via the center’s monthly lunches at which attendees speak only French, the high school students conducted one-on-one interviews **in French** in order to:

- Get to know the person
- Understand his/her experience
- Represent his/her experience via an oral history and documentary panel

The symbiotic arrangement between the Franco-American Heritage Center and the high school works toward fulfilling both institutions’ missions.

B) The **Franco-American Center at the University of Maine in Orono**

The Franco-American Heritage Center in Lewiston Local Franco-Americans

Experts from these organizations came to the high school to participate in an expert panel called **The Franco-American Experience**. In addition to high school students, students, and teachers from French classes around the city were invited to the panel, which was conducted in French. As an additional community service, the panel was also featured on the public service television station.

components, from Day 1 of immersion through to final performances. Through reflection, students and teachers refine the designs of expeditions, the way they are implemented, and the efficacy of each students' role. To illustrate how the expeditionary learning framework can be applied in language classrooms, we look at the example of a learning expedition from a French classroom in an expeditionary learning school in the state of Maine.

The Expedition: Le Maine Francophone: Hier et Aujourd'hui

(*Francophone Maine: Yesterday and Today*)

In 2008, after consulting with a local Franco-American community organization to discern how the French students at the school might be of service to the community, a collaborative project emerged. The high school students would prepare a documentary exhibit entitled *Le Maine Francophone: Hier et Aujourd'hui* to tell the story of Franco-Americans in Maine. For the research and the exhibit, the French class partnered with a Franco-American heritage center in a town near the school. The heritage center was the site for the fieldwork that complemented the students' study in the French classroom. The high school French students attended *La Rencontre*, the lunch at the center held on the first Friday of each month, where Franco-Americans gathered to share lunch, speak French, and enjoy some type of programming in French (e.g., live music, theater, or a comedy). In essence, *La Rencontre* embodies the type of authentic language use in the community and beyond the classroom that is called for in the Standards.

Each high school student was paired with a Franco-American partner with whom they met each month at *La Rencontre*. The Franco-American that each student interviewed became the subject of the student's documentary exhibit at the end of the expedition. At each step in the process, students conducted their interviews in French and used the language in authentic ways across the three modes of communication through a variety of activities, such as:

- learning the content of Franco-American history in the region by conducting research through completion of interpretive (reading and listening) tasks;
- preparing for interviews through simulations and practice interviews; and
- synthesizing learning in presentational tasks.

In addition, students made connections to other disciplines by applying the interview and documentary skills developed during the previous year in an expedition in their humanities class called *The Human Face of Human Rights*. To assist in this process, many of the graphic organizers and structures from the humanities expedition were adapted for use in the French expedition.

Immersion

The immersion phase consisted of the first trip that students made to the Franco-American Heritage Center to meet the person who would eventually become the subject for their documentary project. On four subsequent occasions, students returned to *La Rencontre* to learn more about the Franco-American's experience.

Building Background Knowledge About the Franco-American Experience

Between the monthly trips to Lewiston, students studied different themes related to the Franco-American experience: the immigration from Québec to New England; the discrimination against Franco-Americans in New England; and French today—the reacquisition of French among Franco-Americans. In addition to the study of Franco-American history and culture, students investigated issues related to immigration across the Francophone world and made comparisons between the history they were learning and contemporary immigration issues in France and the United States.

As they built their knowledge of Franco-American history, they also organized and hosted a Franco-American expert panel that included Franco-American historians and community leaders who read portions of and analyzed data presented in “La genèse s’une communauté canadienne-française en nouvelle-angleterre: Lewiston, Maine, 1800–1880.” The content that students were studying along the way provided a clear purpose for the ongoing conversations with the Franco-Americans.

Investigation: Case Study of a Franco-American

The investigation phase was comprised of a series of interviews that students conducted on their subsequent visits to the heritage center. As they learned about the themes in the Franco-American history that they were studying at school, they investigated the extent to which the experience was represented in the personal and familial history of the interviewee. During this repeated interview cycle, the students deepened not only their knowledge of the Franco-American who they interviewed, but they also learned that history as presented in one source does not fully represent the individual experiences of a community and its members.

Culminating Event: A Documentary Gallery at the Franco-American Heritage Center

The final product—the exhibit at the heritage center—told the story of Franco-American history through the experience of the 15–20 individuals that the students interviewed. The students' work provided a service to the community while they learned French. The vision was that the five sessions that the students had with the Franco-American subjects would be more than interviews; they would allow the students to know their experience and, through the documentary products, help to pass on their legacy.

Student Impressions

Student reactions to the work were overwhelmingly positive. Through the experience of interviewing a Franco-American, they came to appreciate the first-hand knowledge that they gained about the history and people. Some students acknowledged the intergenerational relationships that developed as a result of the experience. The learning also prompted some students to inquire beyond the content of the expedition within their own families to learn about their own histories. As one student commented about the experience:

I wouldn't say it has changed [my knowledge of the Franco-American experience], but my knowledge has most certainly grown. I always have known a bit about Franco-Americans in Maine, but more so in Manchester, New Hampshire. This year I really feel a connection between my family in New Hampshire and what I have been learning about in Maine.

Interaction with Experts and Performance Assessment in the Expedition*

Performance assessment occurred at multiple points throughout the expedition. See the figure on p. 43 for a visual representation of assessment in the typical expedition. In this particular expedition, the final interview and the culminating event were part of an Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) that informed instruction and formative assessment decisions across the unit of instruction according to a planning approach similar to *Understanding by Design* by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe (See also Adair-Hauck, Glisan, & Troyan, 2013). Some of the major assessment activities, which aligned with the appropriate goal areas of the World-Readiness Standards, included:

Communication: Communicate effectively in more than one language in order to function in a variety of situations and for multiple purposes

Interpersonal Communication: Students met this standard by interviewing a Franco-American in French over a period of 4 months. At each interview, the student focused the interview on a particular issue in the Franco-American experience (i.e., discrimination against French speakers, the role of French in the subject's family). Interviews were recorded and formative feedback was provided on the students' performance at each interview to prepare for subsequent interviews. Final performance was assessed in the Interpretive, Interpersonal, and Presentational modes of communication through a culminating IPA.

Cultures: Interact with cultural competence and understanding

Through the one-on-one interview described above, the research for the final documentary panel, and the design and presentation of the panel, students gained a deep understanding of the Franco-American experience.

Connections: Connect with other disciplines and acquire information and diverse perspectives in order to use the language to function in academic and career-related situations

Communities: Communicate and interact with cultural competence in order to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world

Students made connections to rich historical content while learning and applying their developing French language during this expedition. As such, they were active participants in the French language community in Maine.

What Does Expeditionary Learning Mean for Your Classroom?

Expeditionary learning provides a compelling framework for the integration of community, social action, and language learning at all levels of instruction. Although the example provided here was specific to one particular context and one particular curriculum, the structures and approaches to assessment in expeditionary learning are highly compatible with instruction that is informed by and aligned with the World-Readiness Standards (the 5 Cs). For example, in classrooms where access to language communities is not easily accessible, links can be facilitated through online interaction.

Alternatively, the organizing principles of expeditionary learning could be adopted to orient an overall communicative approach to language teaching as Brigid Burke described in her 2007 article, *Creating Communicative Classrooms with Experiential Design*. Regardless of the application of the expeditionary learning, the underlying principles have much to offer to language classrooms.

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*A complete/detailed description of the assessment of language and content in this expedition will be provided in a chapter included in an edited volume on CBI that will explore the intersection between cognition, language, and advanced literacy development in foreign language education. See: Troyan, F. (forthcoming). Assessing what matters in content-based foreign language teaching through integrated performance assessment. In L. Cammarata, (ed.), *Content-based foreign language teaching: Curriculum and pedagogy for developing advanced thinking and literacy skills*. New York: Routledge/Taylor Francis.

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Travel Takes Your Students Beyond the Classroom

By LINDA L. EGNATZ

Imagine a classroom with learning centers. Each area offers students an opportunity to do an authentic task in the target language with a native speaker. Activities could include a restaurant, a market, a train station complete with maps and schedules, a medical clinic, a museum or sports arena, and at least one learning center that would offer students a chance to serve the target language community. The classroom itself would be filled with visual and print media to engage the student mind, to fill it with curiosity about their world and a deep desire to engage in its culture.

That's a place where I would like to teach. It's an environment that naturally encompasses our World-Readiness Standards: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. The space would provide me with many different authentic assessment oppor-

tunities. My students would be motivated to perform their best for these real audiences and feedback would come immediately, not in the form of a letter grade, but from a meal served, a purchase completed, a subway destination reached, and so on.

The learning environment described here is my annual spring break student tour. Every year, I have the privilege of taking high school language learners, freshmen through seniors, on a trip to a Spanish-speaking country. I have led tours to Mexico, Spain (alone and in combination with France and Italy), Costa Rica, Argentina, Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands, and most recently to Panama. Students apply their classroom learning in authentic situations with native speakers in ways I could never envision when planning lessons. Students complete tasks one would expect from intermediate-level speakers (e.g., asking for directions,

buying a handcrafted souvenir, ordering from a menu), but there are also those advanced-level probes, those complicated situations that require circumlocution and problem-solving.

Just a few of the memorable ones include:

- The student who negotiated with a guard for a private tour of Argentina's Casa Rosada (the Argentine equivalent to the White House) for himself and five other students
- The student whose backpack was stolen that confidently gave a past narrative of the event to a Barcelona police officer in order to fill out a police report for her insurance
- The student who helped a local peer at one of our school visits set up a Facebook page
- The first-year student who explained with exaggerated gestures to the hotel desk that there was "muchacha, mucha agua en mi baño" when the toilet overflowed

In celebration of Earth Day, high school students shared the importance of nature and then paired with Embera children to draw their environment.



Traveling with students on a 10-day abbreviated tour is perhaps not the best “learning abroad” experience, but it is a great introduction to the possibilities that longer-term study abroad can bring. My students return home with a sense of accomplishment and a newfound confidence in their language prowess. Comments like, “I can’t wait to go back,” and “I’m going to study abroad in college,” evidence the value of these short cultural forays. Travel offers so much to our students. It is for many, first and foremost, an opportunity to negotiate meaning with native speakers in a multisensory context that supports comprehension. Second, it is an opportunity to personally experience culture and gain a wider, more diverse perspective of the world. Third, it is a great precursor to that going-away-to-college experience. Students build close and often long-lasting relationships with their tour companions. As their teacher, I have the joy of observing this transformation. The shift in cultural perspective can be illustrated by a few student quotes:

In Spain (on needing the hotel key card to access electric power), a student said:

Day 1: “I can’t believe we can’t have the A/C on while we’re gone.”

Day 9: “It makes sense to not waste energy if you’re not even in the room.”

I started traveling abroad in high school and it’s greatly changed who I am as a person. I’ve made all sorts of connections with new people through travel and I’ve been encouraged to come out of my shell and try new things. Traveling in high school also really impacted how I view travel in college. I am studying overseas this summer in Valladolid, Spain, and because of my prior experience, I feel much more confident about spending time abroad. Had I not gone on all of those trips, I probably would be very nervous, or I would not have decided to study abroad at all.—*Madeline Brekke*

I traveled to Europe during my sophomore year in high school and it has shaped every single day of my life. I no longer just view someone by what they claim to be, like Mexican or Polish. I see their culture and their struggle. I am minoring in Spanish to not only communicate with people, but to open myself up to their hearts. I will be visiting Panama and Costa Rica in the winter.—*Gianna Capperino, Lewis University, Nursing Major, Class of 2016*

In Ecuador (on putting used toilet paper in a wastebasket rather than flushing it), another said:

Day 1: “Gross, that’s disgusting. I’m going to be sick.”

Day 8: “It’s not a big deal. It’s probably better for the water supply.”

When traveling, students make cultural contrasts naturally. Think of it as a dynamic Venn diagram. Anything new or different is immediately compared with their home culture and categorized as being the same, different, or the sometimes heard, “It’s kind of like home, but different.”

Students welcome that which is the same, but the “other” will engage them, challenge them, puzzle them, and provide the opportunity to make comparisons and connections. A guide in Argentina said, “I find that people will find what they’re looking [for].” I was intrigued by the comment and asked for further explanation. She told me that if people are expecting to find poor and dirty, they will. If they believe that people will be unfriendly or rude, they’ll find that person. If they’re looking to be amazed, the awe will come.

On our first day, this guide’s city tour included not just the famous landmarks of Buenos Aires, but also the shanty town filled with cardboard housing. She explained to students, “Every country has natural beauty, history, and famous sites to explore. Every country also has its challenges, its poor, and its tragedies.”

This thought has stuck with me. Preparing students to travel in this way allows them

to appreciate the places we visit, but also to ask the tough questions about a country’s problems. It gives them permission to fall in love with a place and people without romanticizing an idyllic escape. A traditional language textbook highlights the cultural beauty of a place while a current piece of authentic news most likely features a problem—be it political, economic, or environmental. Student views can be skewed by either. A country is not one or the other, it is both—and that view can best be understood on location.

People often ask, “Why do you give up your spring break vacation every year to travel with high school students? Don’t you need that break for yourself?” The answer is yes! I do need a break. That is about the point in the year when students and teachers are wishing the school year would come to an end. But, surprisingly, that trip abroad with students is exactly what I need. To see students apply classroom learning and hear their proud boasts about what they understood and were able to communicate is energizing. It validates my efforts as a classroom teacher. I come back with renewed passion and purpose and students return with newfound confidence and commitment to language learning. Students who travel usually continue their language learning journey, often choosing to minor in the language in college and pursue travel abroad opportunities.

For the more than 500 students that have participated in these tours, the experience is

Before the trip to Panama, I had never traveled internationally. I was worried not knowing what it would be like, but I’m so glad I decided to go. The experience has earned a place on the top of my list of life-changing experiences. It was amazing to see my 5 years of Spanish classes put to use. It’s fine to learn in a classroom, but nothing can compare with actually visiting a country and speaking the language with people who speak it every day. The trip was unforgettable and I’m excited to look for future opportunities to travel abroad in college and in the rest of my life.—*Ricky Rung*

life-changing. The people and places on our textbook pages come to life when experienced firsthand. I am reminded of one student on a combination tour of Spain and Italy. We were at the Coliseum in Rome and as often happens, I was asked to take a photo of a student. She asked me to wait as she got a prepared sign out of her backpack that stated: "It's real." That is perhaps the best summary of the student travel experience.

My first spring break trip to Ecuador [during] my sophomore year made a big impact on my life. In Spanish class we learn the language, but actually connecting what we learn to different countries and cultures has opened my eyes. Panama was my third and final trip, but I plan on studying abroad in college. My teacher, Mrs. Egnatz, has taught me so much in and out of the classroom, and she has helped increase my confidence in speaking. I've learned that language is truly a key to the world.—*Samantha Fowler*

Where to Go

As a Spanish teacher, I have so many options when deciding where to take students. I've chosen to alternate my student tours between Spain (sometimes paired with other European countries), and Latin America. While my student numbers on the European tours are always greater, student feedback without exception favors the Latin American adventures. Latin American tours offer students more opportunities to use their language by engaging with locals and their culture through outdoor activities, festivals, school visits, and service projects.

While Europe offers the classic bucket list of monuments, museums, and cathedrals "to see," Latin America is a place where students "can do." Students can swim with sea lions in the Galapagos, hike a portion of the Inca Trail or raft the Urubamba River in Peru, climb to the summit of the Cotopaxi volcano in Ecuador, ride horses with Argentine gauchos,

Traveling to Spain and Italy with my travel group as a high school senior was not only memorable, fun, and a trip during which I made great memories; it challenged me to understand how life works in a place so very different from my own. The journey has impressed upon me the importance of lifelong learning, sharing your gifts with others, and making cross-curricular and cross-cultural connections. I can't wait to return to these places and reflect happily upon my first experience immersing myself in new cultures, in order to make meaningful connections with the world and myself. It has prompted a sense of inquisitiveness, adventure, and appreciation, and that growth has been a blessing in so many ways as I navigate the academic and professional worlds.—*Victoria Zaplatosch, Valparaíso University*

zipline through a rainforest canopy in Costa Rica, or navigate a river in dugout canoe to an Embera village in Panama.

Community service is also a part of my Latin American tour design. I have found that when students give of themselves, they leave that piece of their heart behind. They become emotionally invested in the people and places where they feel that they have made a difference. My tour company has helped to arrange a variety of these activities. Students have painted schools and community buildings, planted trees, helped to clean a beach, and laid brick walls. They have given back in many ways: tutoring children, teaching parents to use a Galileo telescope, collecting and bringing school supplies to impoverished jungle schools and vitamins to an orphanage.

These volunteer service activities are transformative. Students are no longer tourists peering out the window of a bus, but instead become contributing global citizens. During these activities, students converse with native speakers, but more importantly, they immerse themselves in local cultures and lifestyles. They realize that they have taken for granted what they have and begin to acknowledge that they have more than they need. They have been humbled by the gratitude expressed by the communities they have served and farewells are often accompanied by tears.

My Latin American tours also offer the opportunity to visit local schools. Students usually arrive shy and nervous, intimidated by their fears of speaking the target language to native speakers, especially if those speakers are the same age. But that awkwardness quickly dissipates as they engage in conversation and find they like the same sports, music,

and activities. Email addresses and Facebook profiles are exchanged. Photos are shared and taken, smiles and hugs abound. It is during this experience that students learn that people in other places are not so different from themselves. They also learn that using language, even imperfectly, creates the bridge to new friendships. Learning the target language now has relevance beyond a test score or semester grade. These "aha!" moments also happen on tours to Europe, but not so naturally or so frequently.

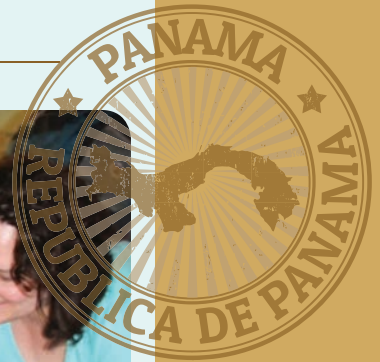
Our trip expanded my view by grounding my idealistic expectations. I will admit that I was one of those bright-eyed students expecting *boulangeries* on every corner and views of la Tour Eiffel no matter where we went. Even though I had read about the social, economic, and political problems of France before, I could not consolidate my ideal France with a real France. When I traveled to France, I was able to see that it was imperfect: We saw homelessness; we saw a police chase; we saw real problems. Yet I wouldn't say this diminished my love for France; on the contrary, it allowed me to better understand the true France. Because I was able to walk on those French streets, I could experience and learn of the various cultures, the political climate, and social issues that no French textbook could encompass.—*Katie Kelly, University of Minnesota Twin-Cities, College of Biological Sciences-Microbiology*

How to Connect

Student travel allows you to include cross-curricular activities and teacher chaperones that can build support and connections for language study within other curricular departments. History and art teachers are natural choices for chaperones on European tours and can provide students with onsite information and answers to questions. I have enjoyed bringing science teachers on my tours to Costa Rica, Ecuador and the Galapagos, and to Panama. They are not intimidated by the jungle, outdoor activities, animals or insects, and are excited to see science in action in these wonderful ecological environments. When possible, I choose teachers from other curricular areas that speak the language of our destination country, even minimally. Students are amazed that a teacher of another subject can also speak the language they are learning. While a frustrating truth, language learning is sometimes perceived as more valuable and important when someone other than the language teacher uses it.

Traveling abroad was a very exciting and educational experience. It's great to be able to see other countries, experience their culture, and see how they live. It was interesting to actually be able to use the language I have been studying in school, Spanish. I would love to pursue a minor in Spanish at the university level and be able to study abroad.—*Nick Marchio*

Traveling with students involves planning and communication with students, parents, administration, and travel providers. I have chosen to minimize the stress and work by using a student travel company. A good one will provide you with itineraries (which I generally customize), insurance options, emergency contact communication, and a round-the-



American students found it a linguistic challenge to coach Embera students as they worked together on elementary math problems.

clock tour director or guide. They make all of the arrangements (e.g., air, train, bus, hotel, restaurants, site visits and more) and they also handle the money, which means my only tasks are to promote the tour and chaperone when we are there. Costs vary by tour company and according to when you go and what activities you include, but can be often adjusted by increasing the student to free chaperone ratio, choosing cheaper hotels and restaurants, etc. I find that parents generally prefer this all-inclusive approach so there are no surprise expenses except for snacks and souvenirs.

I choose different destinations and itineraries intentionally. Because our spring break tours go to different countries and students experience different cultures, vocabularies, accents, they soon realize that they cannot stereotype a "Spanish speaker." Students tend to be very excited to go again the following

year, knowing that it will be a great time and they will learn about a new culture. I also benefit. By leading the tour and traveling for free, cost is no longer an excuse for me not to travel. I love these annual opportunities to refresh my language abilities, my cultural knowledge, and most importantly my passion for what we are doing.

As you watch students apply their classroom knowledge in the real world, you remember why you do what you do. Is there work involved? Yes, but it is truly worth it. For at least 10 days a year, I get to be a teacher in the most incredible classroom of all—the real world.

Linda Egnatz is a Spanish teacher at Lincoln-Way Community High School in Frankfort, Illinois. She is serving as the 2014 ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year.

Traveling abroad impacted my life immensely. I went into college as a chemistry and pre-forensic major, but just a short month into my first semester, I changed my major to Spanish and secondary education. After visiting Spain, I fell in love with the culture and the cities we visited. During my first semester in college, I enjoyed tutoring my teammates in Spanish and I could not understand why they did not like it. I want others to feel the same way that I do about the Spanish language and the culture of the Spanish-speaking countries, that's why I chose to change my major to Spanish and Secondary Education. I am hoping that in the future I can help students see that learning about Spanish and the cultures of Spanish-speaking countries can be fun. Without traveling abroad, I would never have chosen this career path.—*Alyssa Dietz*

So You Say

READER RESPONSES TO ISSUES IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Q:

Q: What have you done to encourage your learners to use their language skills in the real world and in other areas of study? Tell us about a time when you saw your students make meaningful connections beyond your classroom.

Our parish offers English as a second language classes for adults in the evening three days a week from September through May in the high school. Our Sociedad Honoraria and Spanish Club now offer babysitting one of those nights for children of the attendees. Our students get so much out of speaking Spanish with the children, especially the children 2–6 years old who don't attend school and who still primarily speak Spanish. It is such a fun and rewarding experience that some are asking if we can do it all three nights! There is no anxiety as they are speaking with children.

*Kathleen Norwood, Spanish
St. Mary's High School, Annapolis, MD*

Many students seek out opportunities to volunteer in the community in which they live—if only to add another line to their college applications. Several of my students have used their linguistic and cultural competencies to benefit a local afterschool program for youth (The Boys and Girls Club). My students created a series of mini-lessons about the target language and culture. Perhaps just as importantly, they shared their general zeal for the subject matter with the program participants. As educators know, there is no better way to gain mastery over material than to teach it, and this activity did boost my students' overall confidence in their knowledge and abilities. But according to a post-project survey, the venture resulted in something of even greater consequence: It helped my students recognize that they can contribute to solutions in society—a noble outcome to be sure.

*Bendi Benson Schrambach, French
Whitworth University, Spokane, WA*

ACTFL Invites Educators to Offer Their Views in *So You Say*

OCT/NOV

Q: What have you done in your classroom to support learners in understanding what they heard, read, or viewed (input) and in expressing themselves effectively (output)? Tell us about a time when you saw your students successfully comprehend and communicate in the target language.

So You Say is the section where **you** can speak up on the issues most important to **you**.

To offer your views on a topic, please go to www.actfl.org/publications/all/the-language-educator/so-you-say. You will be taken to a form where you may enter a message of no more than 150 words. When finished, click submit and your message will reach the Editor.

This has been a transitional year for French at Mount Vernon High School. We have new Vine and Instagram accounts that students can follow and contribute to via our class iPod devices. From our school accounts I have followed acceptable accounts from Francophone students, businesses, and governmental posters. As our class accounts interact with these Francophone and local accounts, the posts appear in the class iPod devices. Students who choose to follow these accounts through their own social media accounts not only receive participation points for following, but also for interacting with our account and those whom they follow. Through our class accounts, we have offered weekend post challenges and cultural links for students. Our plan is to extend the class account to a weekly experience as part of our cultural knowledge rubric.

*Catherine Ousselin, French
Mount Vernon High School, Mount Vernon, WA*



Add your own comment on this issue's question in *TLE Online* at www.thelanguageeducator.org.

Many college students work in addition to pursuing their academics. One of my students works full-time at a retail outlet mall that is a popular international tourist stop. Our recent vocabulary themes of fashion and purchasing clothing sparked an excited interest from him in class because he has been able to immediately put his new French language skills into action. I make an effort to ask him each time class meets about his most recent interactions with Francophone customers and how he has used his French. He shares stories about how he successfully communicated in French with his beginning-level knowledge (e.g., sizes, prices, colors). I've seen his confidence grow. Now he's so eager to use his language skills that he writes out sentences he wants to use with customers and brings them to me to make sure he's clearly communicating in French. It's fantastic to see the excitement he shows about connecting his developing language skills with the real world!

*Amye Sukapdjo, French
University of North Georgia, Oakwood, GA*

I teach in an area that has many Spanish speakers, and many of my students tell me how they use their Spanish in their jobs: either to speak with other employees, or to help customers. They come back extremely proud of themselves!

*Joanna Kotecki, Spanish
Lakes Community High School, Lake Villa, IL*

Each of my students carried a small notebook which we made in class called "Close Encounters of the German Kind." On each page there was room for student name, date, time, with whom he/she spoke, the circumstances, and a signature. Students brought these to class to show that they had conversed in German with someone outside of class. Often they were very excited about their German encounters on the ski slopes or out in the wilderness and were anxious to share with the whole class.

*Jo Sanders, German
Rilke Schule, Anchorage, AK*

In my classes, I had students set goals regarding their language learning when they wrote prefaces to their portfolios. I asked them to think about taking Spanish in college and studying overseas. Now that I have retired from classroom teaching, many of my students are Facebook friends. I love getting updates from them in Spanish, and I have three former students studying in Spain this summer. How wonderful to relive my own study abroad experience through them, and I'm so happy that they have taken their language proficiency and personal growth experience to the next level! I would also tell my students that their children would study Spanish. I ran into a former student as we were exiting a concert last Saturday (we had not seen each other since she graduated in 1988). She has a daughter in high school and is able to help her with her Spanish. I love it!

*Emily Serafa Manschot
Northville High School (retired)
University of Michigan-Dearborn
Northville, MI*

As a sixth grade teacher (Level 1 for French and Spanish), I created a year-long game in which my students earn a fake currency every time they use their language skills outside of the classroom. Watching movies, reading stories, or listening to podcasts in the target language allow for my students to earn the fake currency. But they earn the most by communicating with native speakers, allowing them to see that even at a Level 1, these languages are practical tools of communication. At the conclusion of the school year, the students conduct an auction in French and Spanish, at which they can purchase Spanish- and French-related items. Obviously, those who have pushed themselves towards fluency will be able to outbid the more passive learner when vying for the Spanish version of Monopoly. They are all winners in the end because they leave the year with the knowledge that these languages are not just textbook subjects. They possess vocabulary that is meaningful to them, not just that of the curriculum, thus forever sealing it in their minds.

*Rebecca Nelson, French and Spanish
Millburn Middle School, Millburn, NJ*

Have a Lot to Say?

Consider submitting an article for one of the upcoming focus topic sections in Jan/Feb 2015 or March/April 2015. Learn more on p. 63.

In the Classroom

Extreme Makeover: Using Technology to Redesign the Traditional Language Syllabus

LARA LOMICKA ANDERSON AND GILLIAN LORD



“It’s in the syllabus.”

Who among us has not repeated those words once, twice, or more throughout any given term? Teachers in general, but probably language teachers in particular, seem to spend a large amount of time devising new and unique ways to improve their classroom environment, foster realistic language use, and create effective second language tasks. However, we rarely take a look at our syllabuses with an eye to making the documents themselves more effective and realistic, and thus more appealing to our students.

Whether you teach at the postsecondary level and are required to provide a syllabus for each course or you teach at the K–12 level and are required to provide students, parents, or the school website with a course description or course guide, we hope all language educators can consider a more engaging way of presenting what learners will experience in our classes.

Consider the potential benefits of undertaking a syllabus (or course description) makeover in terms of making this a document that is approachable and relevant to students. Many instructors lament the fact that their students do not seem to read the course description at the beginning of the class, nor do they refer to it later throughout the term, even when they seek guidance regarding the important aspects of course expectations, assignments, or grading.

There are a number of possible reasons to explain this neglect, but we must consider the fact that syllabuses in general have become overwhelming and unwieldy, not to mention unattractive to students. As B. Fister pointed out in the Inside Higher Ed Library Babel Fish Blog in 2011 (www.insidehighered.com/blogs/library_babel_fish/the_syllabus_as_tos), current “syllabuses are looking more and more like those Terms of Service [TOS] that pop up when we use software. You know, the long documents in fine print with a scrollbar that we click through so we can move on. . . . But the most striking thing about TOS is that they are full of rules—and very few people read them.” Fister asserts that a

syllabus resulting from this legalistic perspective is boring, lacks inspiration, and certainly does not inspire excitement and motivation on the part of the students.

Additionally, even as we are required to include more and more legal and administrative information in our syllabuses, “its basic format has been basically unchanged,” according to J.B. Jones in “Creative Approaches to the Syllabus” in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, ProfHacker Blog in 2011 (chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/creative-approaches-to-the-syllabus/35621).

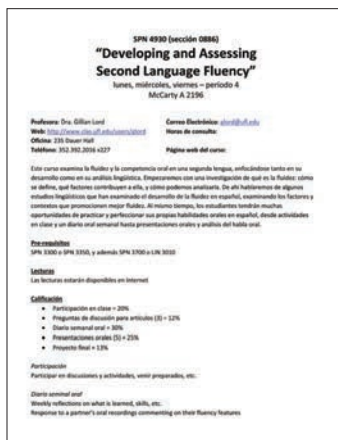
Certainly there are required elements of a syllabus, and there may be aspects of it that cannot be changed. However, there are things in our syllabuses that we can change and we can use new tools and technologies to make them exciting, appealing, and engaging for our students. Such a makeover is no guarantee that students will absolutely pay more attention to the syllabus, but giving our syllabuses a technological facelift can help promote our courses, engage our students, and provide a relevant and useful resource for our students to access quickly and easily.

Consider for a moment the most recent syllabus you wrote or used. What adjectives would you use to describe that syllabus? Was it . . .

- Boring or eye-catching?
- Traditional or creative?
- Dull or fun?
- Instructor-/institution-centered or student-centered?
- Text heavy or inclusive of multimedia resources?
- Overly detailed or succinct?

As you look at your syllabus, consider what visual and/or technological elements you have included, if any. What would you like to improve about your syllabus? How could you make that happen? What tools might you use? What if your syllabus could go through an extreme makeover and go . . .

from looking like the traditional black-and-white, text-heavy document like this . . .



to becoming a more visually appealing one like this?



Various technologies available today make it possible for us to create stylish, exciting, and informative syllabuses for our students. We should consider layout and design, and we can utilize a number of different tools that can help improve these aspects. Of course, the content itself is key and, again, there are tools that can assist with reworking this aspect of the syllabus.

Making Over the Syllabus

Determine the content. The first step is to determine the content of the syllabus, beginning with the basics. As previously noted, our syllabuses have become “bloated,” and any reduction in the growing length of these documents can help our students appreciate them more. So consider what information has to be included by institutional requirement, and begin with that. Then you should ponder what you as the instructor would like for the syllabus to include and also, crucially, what you believe your students want to know. With that in mind, plan the content layout by grouping similar information in a way that is logical to you and your students, and ensuring the critical information is highlighted. Explore various ways to lay out and order the content so that you catch the reader’s attention and, importantly, hold it.

Choose layout and design. Once you have determined the necessary content of the syllabus, it is time to choose the design. A number of options are available to make the overall layout and presentation of the syllabus document more aesthetically pleasing and engaging to the students. At this point it is necessary to consider whether or not the syllabus needs to be printed at all, or if it can remain digital. Many institutions require online posting of syllabuses, although fewer are requiring hard-copy printouts. If the syllabus will only ever exist digitally, you can consider less linear designs that need not be restricted to page size, length, or

order, but can instead exploit the hyperlinking potential of web-based resources.

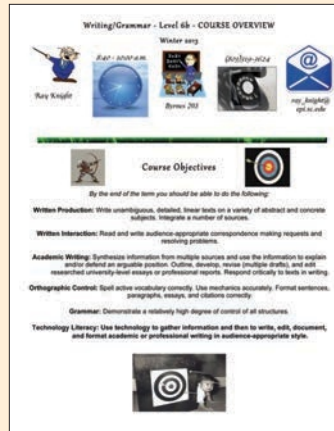
The following are possible resources that can aid in the layout and design of your made-over syllabus.

- Virtually all word processing software programs currently available (e.g., office.microsoft.com; www.apple.com/mac/pages/) include templates for creating brochures, flyers, and newsletters—and these are ideal to adapt to syllabus creation. The advantage of these templates is that they allow users to create professional-looking documents with pre-determined layouts, color and font schemes, and graphics. Additionally, they can be viewed online or printed out for digital and hard-copy access.
- Prezi (www.prezi.com) is a free cloud-based presentation software and storytelling tool for presenting ideas on a virtual canvas. The primary feature of Prezi is its Zooming User Interface, which allows readers to focus on various aspects of a presentation without leaving the page; the order of viewing can be predetermined or left up to the viewer. Prezi is an ideal tool for an entirely online syllabus although the difficulty in printing out a Prezi makes it somewhat more problematic if your syllabus has to exist in hard-copy form as well.
- Piktochart (piktochart.com) is a free web application (with premium upgrades available) that allows users to easily create and customize infographics. Suitable for both printed and digital syllabuses, Piktochart provides graphic renditions of your content. Piktochart is most appropriate for shorter syllabuses with less textual information, as it becomes cumbersome to try to include paragraphs of text.

Enhance and edit. After establishing the primary content and the overall layout, the next step is to enhance the visual appeal of the syllabus. It is important to think beyond standard black-and-white

Samples of Made-Over Language Syllabuses

During the spring of 2014, the authors taught a cross-institutional collaborative seminar on technology in language education, and included this kind of makeover in the syllabus. Students in the course, who were graduate students teaching a variety of languages at K–12 and higher education levels, had to redesign a syllabus of their choosing. Shown here are screen shots of their results, and the documents themselves are available at: bit.ly/sylmkver.



Academic Writing and Grammar



Intensive Portuguese for Spanish Speakers

text pages and consider incorporating visuals, web links, or other non-text-based information. Often text can be replaced with links to online resources, such as grading rubrics or institution policies. Graphics such as pie charts can be used to illustrate the components of the course grade. QR codes can link to online resources. Tables, columns, and call-out boxes can be used to highlight and organize the most important information. As you refresh the content of your syllabus, keep in mind what you consider to be eye-catching and engaging while considering the students' interactions with the content and how and where they will find the information they need.

At this point you will need to edit the syllabus for content as well as design. This step can be time consuming given the novel format of the syllabus now. Flexibility is a key part of this step and it may involve trying out several visual presentations of a particular aspect to see what works best. Next, you'll need to modify text as needed; it is not written in stone. Try to keep what is essential and think about how it can be presented in different ways that are more visual. Make sure that the visuals accentuate but don't detract from the

content. Finally, try to predict how your students will approach the document. You could, for example, test your product on a couple of former students and solicit their reactions, comments, and feedback.

Respect copyright rules! Remember that images and other content are often subject to copyright rules. For example, you cannot use images from the Internet unless you are specifically granted rights to use them. In fact, any picture taken in the United States (and in most other countries) is considered to be copyrighted, and it is the property of the person who took the picture. When at all possible, it is best to use clip art available in your software, materials freely available from your textbook publisher, or your own photos or graphics. Flickr (flickr.com) contains a large number of creative commons-licensed content; you can easily search pictures for those by typing in Creative Commons into the search window. Morguefile (morguefile.com) also offers a free photo archive with images that can be freely used. Whatever method you choose, it is helpful to stay organized with a picture folder to store all of your pictures and graphics. Additionally, be sure to cite any pictures or graphics you use, which may involve obtaining necessary permission as well. Finally, at the end of your syllabus, create an image bibliography—this is a perfect way to show your students proper reference format.

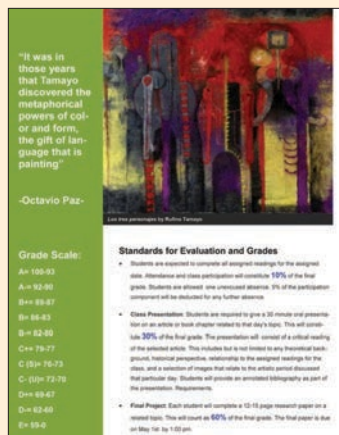
Other Resources for Syllabus Development and Design

- An Educator's Guide to a 21st Century Syllabus: app.box.com/shared/evlrq8or3d
- 5 Steps to a Good Syllabus: sc.edu/cte/guide/syllabus/index.shtml
- Language Syllabus Examples: creativelanguageclass.wordpress.com/2013/08/07/and-the-most-exciting-syllabus-goes-to/
- Syllabus Development: www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/tutorials/syllabus/index.html
- Syllabus Design: See Chapter 4 in *Language Program Direction: Theory and Practice* by G. Lord (2013)

Final Considerations

As you consider a makeover for your syllabus, consider the following 10 tips:

1. At all stages of syllabus development, design, and editing, consider your audience and the purpose of the class.
2. Welcome learners with your opening paragraph: It sets the tone for the course.
3. It's not all about graphics. Use them to accentuate and highlight important information, but consider other innovations discussed here as well.
4. Plan to keep it simple. You may need to modify it later.



Seminar in Spanish-American Literature



Beginning Italian



Introduction to Spanish Phonetics

- Institutional requirements may be reducible to web links to keep the syllabus shorter and less cluttered.
- Think *quick reference* and easy access.
- For Word docs, always post online as a .pdf file.
- Using copyrighted graphics? Add a properly formatted bibliography.

- Solicit student feedback.
- Be creative and don't be afraid to try something new!

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ACTFL
AMERICAN COUNCIL ON THE
TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES



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– Larissa Arist

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The following courses (each three graduate credits) will be offered in the Fall 2014 semester, which begins **September 8**.

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Legislative Look

NATIONAL, STATE, AND LOCAL NEWS ON POLICY AND LEGISLATION

Committee Rescinds Proposed Cut to NEH

In June, the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee passed an amendment that rescinds a proposed \$8 million cut to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The amendment passed with substantial bipartisan support.

Previously, the House subcommittee that oversees funding for the NEH had proposed to fund the organization at its lowest level since 1972. If enacted, this \$8 million cut would have brought NEH's funding level to just \$138 million for 2015.

JNCL-NCLIS sent out several alerts which helped to mobilize language educators and other supporters of the humanities to contact their lawmakers and convince the committee to rescind the funding cut.

Louisiana Senate Passes Language Immersion Expansion Bill

This spring, Louisiana's Senate approved a bill that—if signed into law by Governor Bobby Jindal—could significantly expand access to language immersion programs. The bill would require school districts that offer such programs to enroll kindergartners and first graders per parent request and pending teachers and funding. The bill also would allow students who live inside a district's boundaries to have access to the programs under certain conditions.

School systems that currently offer language immersion will have to offer it to all kindergarten and first-grade chil-

dren whose parents want them enrolled if Gov. Jindal signs House Bill 763 into law. The bill says that any school district that offers language immersion classes cannot reject any students in kindergarten or first grade who want to get into the programs as long as three conditions are met. The Council for the Development of French in Louisiana or the Department of Education must provide teachers, the state funding formula that provides money to pay for the classes must continue to do so, and parents must have signed up by March 1 of the year when their children are to enter the program.

Meeting with Our Lawmakers

See photos of ACTFL leaders and the 2014 National Language Teacher of the Year visiting Capitol Hill during the 2014 JNCL-NCLIS Legislative Day and Delegate Assembly on p. 20 of this issue.



Language Education Leaders Participate in AAAS/British Academy Conference

In June, ACTFL leadership was part of the U.S. delegation to the first Joint Conference of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAAS) and the British Academy. ACTFL, along with the JNCL-NCLIS, has been working with AAAS as part of the Languages for All initiative. The British Academy participated in last September's summit on Languages for All.

Executive Director Marty Abbott, who is also President-Elect of JNCL-NCLIS, represented ACTFL at the conference and the leader of the American delegation was Richard Brecht, representing the University of Maryland and the Languages for All initiative. Other language education leaders included JNCL-NCLIS Executive Director Bill Rivers; Dan Davidson, representing American Councils for International Education; and Rita Oleksak (also an ACTFL Past President), representing NNELL.

The meeting in London covered 2 days, with an invitation-only roundtable, hosted by Professor Will Hutton, Principal of Hertford College, Oxford University, and former Director of *The Guardian* newspaper. The U.S. delegation at the roundtable also included Dr. Hunter Rawlings III, President of the American Association of Universities; Judge Diane Wood, Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit; and Pauline Yu, President of the American Council of Learned Societies.

One of the major benefits of participation in this conference is to forge partnerships with others internationally, in this case the United Kingdom, who share our goals to promote language education.

Learn more about the roundtable at www.theguardian.com/education/2014/jul/08/lack-of-languages-stifles-brits-americans.



EDITOR'S NOTE: In this issue, we begin a series of short articles focused on various states and their recent advocacy efforts.

Language advocacy is a top priority of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association (MaFLA). In 2013, MaFLA designated an Advocacy Coordinator as part of its Board. This position is a 4-year term and the person who serves in this role attends the JNCL-NCLIS Legislative Day and Delegate Assembly each year, and also serves as the ACTFL State Team leader.

Nicole Sherf, Professor and Secondary Education Coordinator at Salem State University, was chosen as the first Advocacy Coordinator by the MaFLA Board. The creation of the position was, she says, “a strong statement” by the organization to its members of the importance of advocacy.

Sherf says that having an ACTFL State Team has been very useful in her state. “It provided us with an efficient mechanism for accomplishing our advocacy goals and it has helped us work on communication and identify processes for advocacy.”

She says ACTFL has been helpful in a number of ways, from organizing the quarterly calls for the State Teams to working individually with Massachusetts to create a better mechanism for contacting state legislators.

Massachusetts is the first to pilot a “state version” of Capwiz, the online advocacy program that allows users to send messages and alerts to supporters, members, or legislators in a variety of ways. On the ACTFL

website under the Advocacy tab (www.actfl.org/advocacy), members can click on the words “Take Action!” to be taken to the Capwiz interface. In Massachusetts, members received e-blasts that linked to the Advocacy pages at www.mafla.org to take action and contact their legislators.

MaFLA pursues advocacy on a number of fronts, including through a quarterly newsletter, their website, and with e-blasts. They offer an advocacy booth at the MaFLA Annual Conference and have offered a variety of advocacy resources and ideas as well as filmed attendees for clips to display on the website. They have also begun pursuing legislative efforts related to establishing a Seal of Biliteracy.

Sherf says that Capwiz has been very useful for specific legislative issues, such as the Seal, by helping members to contact legislators. In fact, an aide to State Rep. Kay Khan recently said the language teachers’ voices on this issue had “made a big impact.”

While the Seal of Biliteracy has not yet been realized in the state, Sherf says that MaFLA is partnering with those outside the language education profession, including the Globalization and Localization Association (GALA) and American Translators Association (ATA) to continue to make the issue a top priority.

Sherf stresses the importance of working together collaboratively to further advocacy

efforts. “It’s hard to do it on your own,” she says, “so you need to work together.” She credits many people who are critical to advocacy efforts in the state, including MaFLA Communication Coordinator Ronie Webster and immediate Past President Tiesa Graf. “Both of them are incredible in using social media to get information out to members and legislators,” she notes. Since Massachusetts does not have a State Supervisor, MaFLA designates a representative to NCSSFL and supports their attendance at the MaFLA Annual Conference. Membership Coordinator Madelyn Gonnerman Torchin has been in this role since 2011.

Sherf, who teaches Methods classes, says she has long talks with her students about how languages can sometimes be considered as non-essential, and how we must all fight against that.

“I involve a lot of my students in advocacy efforts—I even recruit some of them as MaFLA Advocacy Interns to help at the Advocacy Booth at the Conference and with other advocacy efforts. I strongly feel it is something that needs to be brought into teacher development,” she says. “They may need to push to get their sections scheduled and they may have to explain what good teaching and assessment of language learning looks like. They need to be ready to be not only teachers, but also language advocates.”

State Teams Experience Great Success in Achieving Legislative Goals

Two years ago, ACTFL began working with teams in states that wanted to work on a specific local initiative. We quickly realized that by working strategically on an issue, real progress could be made. We saw states enacting biliteracy seal programs, winning legislation to enact high school graduation requirements, and building awareness among elected officials of the benefits of language learning by inviting them to school and community events. State Teams now participate in quarterly conference calls to share strategies and successes. They have identified 10 state goals that all teams are striving to achieve. [See a list of these goals and a toolbox for strategies to achieve them at www.actfl.org/advocacy.] We encourage State Team members to attend both the ACTFL Assembly of Delegates held on the Thursday prior to the convention, and the JNCL-NCLIS Legislative Assembly in May where they can visit Capitol Hill. JNCL and ACTFL work closely

together along with The Sheridan Group, an education lobbying firm, to orchestrate and realize legislative goals. Most recently, the ACTFL Board of Directors approved a legislative agenda to get Congress to request a National Academies study of the link between language skills and economic interests by answering the fundamental question: **Does language learning improve the economic competitiveness/productivity of future generations of Americans? If so, how does language competence translate into concrete benefits that improve economic growth?** JNCL-NCLIS Executive Director Bill Rivers and Rachel Hanson, Managing Policy Analyst, have been working with the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAAS) to formalize the request to Congress, and the team from JNCL and ACTFL will be working to engage legislators to sign onto the letter to AAAS.

—Marty Abbott, ACTFL Executive Director



Advocacy Tip: *Don't Wait for a Crisis— Start Standards-Based Advocacy Now*



Take an online survey and share the ways that you showcase the value of your program and its impact on language learners in *TLE Online* at www.thelanguageeducator.org.

BY JESSICA HAXHI AND BENJAMIN RIFKIN

Unfortunately, we read about it all too often in the press: budgets for schools and colleges being cut again and language programs being reduced or eliminated. Sometimes the programs or faculty in the cross-hairs reach out to their extended communities, asking for help in generating letters and email messages to the school principal, department chair, or college dean, with a plea to preserve a particular language or even a series of language programs.

It is generally true, however, that by the time things have advanced to this point, there is little impact that letters from outside parties (whom the principal or dean have never met) will have on the decision to cut the language program because the person in charge has already identified the language program as “low-hanging fruit.”

While he or she may agree that it would be best not to cut the Italian program, for example, those writing to plead for its preservation are usually not offering an alternative path to budgetary savings that could take the place of the Italian program on the chopping block. There are also times when the person who has the power to make the decision does not think highly of language instruction—perhaps due to a bad experience she or he had as a student 40 years ago.

In short, “crisis advocacy” is an oxymoron. The best way to protect your language program is by developing a standards-based advocacy campaign that begins immediately—the moment that you finish reading this issue of *The Language Educator*—rather than trying to put together something that arises only when your program is identified as a target for a budget cut.

Begin by identifying your language program stakeholders including students, alumni, teachers in other programs in your school or college, representatives of your professional organizations (including ACTFL, your regional and state associations, language-specific association, and so on), community members, community businesses, state education consultants for world languages, and others. In the pre-K–12 system, stakeholders also include your students’ parents and relatives. Once you have identified your language program stakeholders, think about how you engage those stakeholders in your enterprise. Invite them to a special event and honor them while they are there. Make them feel connected to what you are doing and invite their contributions to your program.

Next, focus your attention on making certain that your curriculum reflects the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities (see <https://www.actfl.org/publications/all/world-readiness-standards-learning-languages>). Plan for your curriculum to consist of activities that facilitate learning in each of these goal areas and design your

assessment program to evaluate the degree to which each learner demonstrates the ability to use language in each of these contexts.

To that end, it is essential that your curriculum is based on reasonable expectations of what students can accomplish in your program, given the requirements of the other aspects of their lives (e.g., three or four other classes for college students, five to six other classes for high school students, a job and/or a sport, etc.). Develop and assign your assessment tasks so that you can collect and then display artifacts demonstrating your students’ success in ways that will be compelling for your entire community.

As you implement Standards-based instruction, you must also design and implement the Standards-based assessment activities, collecting artifacts you can use to document your program’s success. Whenever community members come to class, be ready to photograph and video-record interactions in order to document community engagement.

Create multiple channels for a stream of information for your stakeholders, including, for example, a bulletin board so that all visitors walking by can see, in just a moment, the great work you are doing. In addition, consider newsletters disseminated by email once a semester or a website with email messages going to all stakeholders to remind them to see updated content at the site at least twice a year. You must regularly connect with your stakeholders and cultivate their support, providing them with a steady flow of evidence demonstrating the excellence of your program. Be sure to invite them to public events in which your students perform in the language and, when appropriate, honor those stakeholders and thank them for their support in those public venues. You cannot afford to wait until your program is threatened to start garnering supporters.

Finally, we strongly recommend that you make yourself “indispensable” to your school: volunteer as much as you can, be a good friend to the historians, offer to teach a poem for the literature faculty, run the yearbook, coach the soccer team, be on school committees, and be ready to connect as much as possible.

All of these strategies will help you and your program move beyond what might be the low-hanging fruit in the next budget crisis. They will also help you position your language program at the center of the learning experience, rather than on the margins.

Jessica Haxhi is World Languages Supervisor at New Haven Public Schools, New Haven, Connecticut.

Benjamin Rifkin is Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and a Professor of World Languages and Cultures (Russian) at The College of New Jersey, Ewing, New Jersey. He is a member of the ACTFL Board of Directors.



Examples for Each Goal Area

COMMUNICATION: In a second-year college French class, students are assigned to write an email message introducing themselves to their new pen pals in Senegal. The students are given parameters of length and guidelines for topics to discuss; once the emails are ready, they are sent and then students receive responses from their new friends in Senegal. The correspondence begins to flow back and forth and students are asked to reflect, from time to time, about phrases their Senegalese pen pals use and about cultural phenomena that come up in the correspondence. Email shifts into Skype calls and students take photos of one another while Skyping with their pen pals to document their communication. In an assessment exercise, students write biographies of their pen pals and illustrate them with photos, preparing a presentation for class on this basis. Community members with a connection to West Africa are invited to come to the presentation, to discuss in French their own biographies and listen to the students talk about their pen pals.

CULTURES: In a second-year high school Spanish class, students work in groups to prepare short performances for an evening of skits open to the public, including the recitation of poems, an adaptation of a telenovela, parodies of commercials from a Hispanic culture, and other performances. Spanish-speaking members of the larger community are invited to help coach some of the groups in preparation for the performance, while others are invited to serve as judges, together with teachers of music, theater, and dance, giving out both serious and funny awards. The entire evening is recorded on video and clips are made available on the school website to celebrate.

CONNECTIONS: Students in a sixth-grade Chinese class learn how to talk about items in the home and their uses in the context of a “reduce, re-use, and recycle” unit. First, they talk about the natural resources from which various household objects are made (trees, metals, rock, fossil fuels, etc.). They discuss how they use these objects (“I use paper towels to clean”), labeling various practices as “good” or “bad” for the

environment. They also look at the merits of using washable chopsticks versus wooden chopsticks. Students then sort the items into those that they should reduce, re-use, and/or recycle. As one of their assessments, students create posters in Chinese discouraging activities that are bad for the environment, such as the use of paper plates. These posters are displayed at a local Chinatown area.

COMPARISONS: In a third-grade elementary school Japanese class, students share knowledge of their own family weddings via pictures and drawings, noting the many different traditions they see. They then look at photos and videos from a variety of Japanese weddings. Using two hula-hoops, they create a Venn Diagram comparing Japanese weddings to those they have been to in their local community. Brides often wear white in both cultures, but in Japan the bride may change her dress three or four times during the reception. As a culmination of their learning, students throw a Japanese reception for two stuffed animals, complete with mini-self introduction speeches (in Japanese), clothing changes for the “bride,” and Japanese-style money envelopes created by the students.

COMMUNITIES: In a third-year college Russian class, students sign up for a Russian social media site such as LiveJournal (www.livejournal.com) and find Russian “friends” with whom to discuss issues of mutual interest and concern. They document their participation in a Russophone community with Russian-speaking peers (whether they are in Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, or New York City) with a multimedia-based presentation on the topic of interest, including links to their own communication as well as YouTube clips and stories in the media that informed or sparked their discussion. Russian-speaking community members, including professors of Russian history or politics, are invited to come to class to hear the presentations and share their own thoughts about the topics with the class.

For more information about putting languages at the center of the postsecondary learning experience, see www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/le-su12/rifkin.cfm. To learn more about K–12 advocacy, visit ctworldlanguages8.wikispaces.com/Program+Advocacy+Articles.



WEBwatch

What's Online for Language Educators

Open Library

openlibrary.org

Open Library says that its goal is to provide a page on the web for every book published. It is a catalog that can be searched by subject, author, place, person, or time in history. Users can also create their own search criteria. The Accessible Books section currently has several million free e-books, and the Lending Library has about 200,000 e-books.

Spanish in Texas

spanishintexas.org

Spanish in Texas is a project of the Center for Open Educational Resources and Language Learning (COERLL) at the University of Texas, Austin. Its purpose is "to profile Spanish as it is spoken throughout Texas today and to provide open learning tools that allow students, teachers, and the general public to explore Spanish language variation." The website has an archive of authentic Spanish videos for language learning and a blog with posts about how to use the content. There is also a section for researchers interested in building upon the work of the project or replicating it in other contexts.

Teaching Controversial Issues

www.procon.org

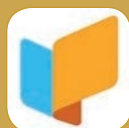
ProCon is a free resource that is intended for presenting unbiased information on controversial issues. The topics include education, elections, health and medicine, media and entertainment, politics, science and technology, and world and international issues. While some of these may seem too controversial, even elementary schools are finding ways to use the resource. The "Teachers' Corner" on the site offers lesson plan ideas and explanations from teachers about how they use ProCon in their classrooms to promote critical thinking and skills such as research and essay writing. World language teachers have used it for helping their students learn about the differing viewpoints on issues such as immigration and global climate change. The site is accessible in a number of different languages.

Free Audio Editor and Recorder

audacity.sourceforge.net/

Audacity is free, open-source software for recording and editing sounds. The 2.0.3 version is now available for Windows, Mac, GNU/Linux, and other operating systems. The Audacity website has a wiki with tips and tutorials and a forum for questions and discussions.

What's that APP? Download



Lingua.ly

Lingua.ly is an innovative new learning solution that helps someone learn a language from the Internet. Learners look up words from any web page with a free mobile dictionary and create personalized language flashcards for the smart learning system. The more someone learns with Lingua.ly, the more Lingua.ly "learns that learner." Lingua.ly studies a person's chosen words and click patterns to suggest real articles from the web that he or she can understand. The app helps the learner collect vocabulary, define it with pictures and example sentences, practice when the time is right, and find new and exciting things to read that are a perfect fit for that person's unique level. The free Android app is currently available on Google Play at tinyurl.com/google-lingua-ly. Go to lingua.ly/registernewrelease.php to sign up to be contacted when the app is available for Apple iOS.



Beginners' Chinese-Audio

This free app from The Open University features audio podcasts for learning some of the basics of Mandarin Chinese. Topics include greetings and introductions, sports, asking for directions, making purchases, ordering food, and inviting someone to dinner. There are also interviews in English that are intended to assist listeners in learning more about Chinese culture. To download the app, visit tinyurl.com/itunes-beginner-chinese.

The French Corner Blog

www.thefrenchcorner.net

Samantha Decker, a middle school French teacher from upstate New York, started the French Corner website for the purpose of teaching basic French, but she then began adding information on French culture. The site has now evolved into a blog focused on teaching French, which features articles, videos, a YouTube playlist, activities, games, and authentic resources. Decker welcomes submissions from other teachers who want to share ideas and materials.

What Works Clearinghouse

ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/default.aspx

The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) is an initiative of the Institute for Education Sciences at the U.S. Department of Education and is administered by the National Center for Education Evaluation. It identifies studies that provide “credible and reliable evidence of the effectiveness of a given practice, program, or policy.” The information is then made available on an online searchable database. The database currently has more than 700 publications and 6,000 reviewed studies, and among the topic areas are English language learners, children and youth with disabilities, student behavior, teacher incentives, and education technology.

Setting up Interactive Notebooks

interactive-notebooks.wikispaces.com

This page is intended to help teachers with setting up interactive student notebooks with their classes. There are general guidelines, strategies, and examples, as well as links to other sites where teachers share advice and information. There are a couple by language educators, one of whom is Jillane Baros, a Spanish teacher who uses ACTFL’s recommendations and standards as the basis for her classroom teaching. Her blog (profabaros.blogspot.com) has a very helpful section on interactive notebooks.

SMART Board Resources and Ideas

www.exchange.smarttech.com

SMART Exchange is intended to provide teachers with ideas, lesson plans, and images for use with all of the SMART resources, as well as provide a professional community in which they can connect with other educators. Resources are organized by subject and grade, and include “Modern Foreign Languages.” Customized searches also can be created. The site also supports 48 different countries in 23 languages.

Live Lingua

www.livelingua.com

In addition to its paid Skype language lessons, Live Lingua offers 60-minute free trial lessons in Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. The site also has an archive of free language learning material as well as a blog with numerous articles of interest to language learners and teachers of world languages.

The French Writing Center

avosplumes.org

A Vos Plumes! is a project that was funded by the University of Virginia’s Teaching + Technology Initiative. UVA French professor Alison J. Murray Levine notes that the site is for students who want to write better in French and for teachers who want to help them. The section for teachers includes articles, handouts, classroom writing and oral activities, and interactive written homework exercises. There is also a forum where teachers can post questions for other teachers, and students can ask questions of French teachers or other students.

ACTFL does not vouch for or endorse the content of any non-ACTFL websites that may be mentioned in this section or elsewhere in the magazine.

These and other Web resources can be accessed through the Publications area on the ACTFL website at www.actfl.org/publications/the-language-educator/web-watch-online.

Visit today.

Upcoming Events 2014-2015

AUGUST

August 22 Deadline for applications for the 2014–2015 ACTFL Mentoring Program. www.actfl.org/professional-development/career-resources/mentoring-program



SEPTEMBER

September 3 Deadline to register for fall courses for ACTFL/UMUC Graduate Program: Online Certificate in Instructional Technology Integration. www.umuc.edu/actfl

September 30 Deadline for ACTFL/NFMLTA/MLJ Dissertation Support Grants. www.actfl.org

OCTOBER

October 1 Deadline for submissions to the January/February 2015 issue of *The Language Educator* focus topic: Moving Along the Proficiency Continuum. www.actfl.org/publications/all/the-language-educator/special-focus-topics-future-issues-the-language-educator

October 9–11 Washington Association for Language Teaching and Confederation in Oregon for Language Teaching Bi-State Conference (held in conjunction with the Pacific Northwest Council for Languages), Vancouver, WA. www.waflt.net

Featuring:

Special ACTFL Pre-Convention Workshop: *Planning for Student Learning: Effective Curriculum, Unit, and Lesson Design* on **Thursday, October 9**
Presenter: Donna Clementi

October 27 Deadline for Housing Reservations for the 2014 ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo, San Antonio, TX. www.actfl.org/2014convention-expo

October 29 Deadline for Advance Registration for the 2014 ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo, San Antonio, TX. www.actfl.org/2014convention-expo



NOVEMBER

November 5–11 National French Week. www.frenchteachers.org/nfw/

November 17–21 International Education Week. eca.state.gov/programs-initiatives/international-education-week

November 20 ACTFL/CAEP Program Reviewer Training, San Antonio, TX. www.actfl.org/professional-development/actfl-caep

November 20 Pre-Convention Workshops, Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center and Grand Hyatt San Antonio Hotel, San Antonio, TX. www.actfl.org/convention-expo

November 21–23 2014 ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo, Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center and Grand Hyatt San Antonio Hotel, San Antonio, TX. www.actfl.org/convention-expo

Also co-sponsoring the ACTFL Convention in San Antonio:

- American Association of Teachers of German – www.aatg.org
- American Association of Teachers of Italian – www.aati-online.org
- American Association of Teachers of Japanese – www.aatj.org
- Chinese Language Association of Secondary-Elementary Schools – www.classk12.org
- Chinese Language Teachers Association – www.clta-us.org
- National Association of District Supervisors of Foreign Languages – www.nadsfl.org
- National Council of State Supervisors for Languages – www.ncssfl.org
- National Network for Early Language Learning – www.nnell.org
- Texas Foreign Language Association – www.tfla.info/



DECEMBER

December 1 Deadline for submissions to the March/April 2015 issue of *The Language Educator* focus topic: Designing Learner-Centered Language Instruction. www.actfl.org/publications/all/the-language-educator/special-focus-topics-future-issues-the-language-educator

JANUARY

January 8–11 Modern Language Association Convention, Vancouver, B.C., Canada. www.mla.org/convention

Find More Upcoming Events Listed in the ACTFL Online Community

If you are looking for additional conferences, professional workshops, and special events of interest to language educators and administrators, please visit the ACTFL Online Community Events Calendar at **community.actfl.org/ACTFL/Events1/UpcomingEvents**.

If you have any events to add to this calendar, please send the information to membership@actfl.org.



The Language Educator

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Announcements



The Language Educator Receives Award for Theme Series

Three issues of *The Language Educator* from the 2013–2014 theme series have won an **Award of Excellence** in the **2014 Awards for Publication Excellence (APEX)** competition. The issues published in November 2013 (Theme: Instruction), January 2014 (Theme: Cultural Proficiency), and February 2014 (Theme: Assessment and Feedback) received this recognition. The August 2013 issue on The Learner had previously received a 2013 Gold MarCom award. The theme series also included issues on Technology (October 2013) and Professional Development (April 2014).

APEX is an annual competition sponsored by Communications Concepts open to communicators in corporate, nonprofit, and independent settings. 2014 marks the 26th annual APEX, which began in 1988.

The issues of *The Language Educator* were entered in the category: “Magazine Series.” The magazine is produced under the leadership of ACTFL Executive Director Marty Abbott and Director of Education Paul Sandrock, with *TLE* Editor Sandy Cutshall, Creative Director Pauline Goulah, and Senior Designer Linda Prinzi.

More information about APEX is available at www.apexawards.com. The theme series issues can be accessed by ACTFL members online at www.thelanguageeducator.org.

Advertise in *The Language Educator* **MARKETPLACE**

Reach language educators by contacting Julia Richardson at jrichardson@actfl.org or 703-894-2900

SPECIAL FOCUS TOPICS FOR FUTURE ISSUES OF The Language Educator

We invite your article submissions for the following topics in upcoming issues of *The Language Educator*.

FOCUS TOPICS

Jan/Feb 2015

Moving Along the Proficiency Continuum

What does it take to guide learners to the next level of proficiency? Share your examples of how the three modes of communication may interact and be emphasized differently as learners move to higher levels (to reach Intermediate, Advanced, Superior). What does the learner need to demonstrate and how do we elicit that performance?

Article submissions due: **OCT 1, 2014**

Mar/Apr 2015

Designing Learner-Centered Language Instruction

Tell us about how you have explored topics like flipped classrooms, hybrid learning, use of tablets (1:1 classrooms). How do learners self-reflect on their own progress? What do innovative classrooms that empower learners look like? Can you share your story?

Article submissions due: **DEC 1, 2014**

Learn more and submit your articles at www.actfl.org/publications/all/the-language-educator/special-focus-topics-future-issues-the-language-educator.

GET IN THE *game!*

 **ACTFL**
ANNUAL CONVENTION
& WORLD LANGUAGES EXPO

SAN ANTONIO 2014
HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER
NOVEMBER 21–23

Reaching Global Competence

Are you ready to make your next move as a language educator, a professional, and a colleague? Then we'll see you in San Antonio! The 2014 ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo features an amazing array of professional learning and collaborative networking opportunities. Join your colleagues from around the world for this incredible learning experience. The ACTFL Convention is an international event bringing together more than 6,000 language educators from all languages, levels, and assignments. We hope you will join us for this importance conference, November 21–23, in San Antonio, Texas, to help celebrate together the theme of "Reaching Global Competence."



MAKE IT A WIN, WIN! *When You Register for ACTFL 2014*

When you register for the 2014 ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo AND you invite another colleague to register, you will automatically be entered in a drawing to **win a \$500 American Express gift card** if your referred colleague also registers. We will announce the winner of the gift card in the ACTFL Connection e-newsletter during the first week in November, but your chances increase with every colleague you invite who registers. Make sure to register before **October 29** and help us spread the word by inviting colleagues who would benefit from attending.

Opening General Session



Designing a life and career as a globally competent individual will be a central theme of the convention keynote address given at the Opening General Session on Friday, November 21, by international photographer and philanthropist Annie Griffiths. One of the first women photographers to work for National Geographic magazine, Griffiths has photographed in nearly 150 countries during her career. She is also the Executive Director of Ripple Effect Images, a collective of photographers who document programs which empower women and girls throughout the developing world. She will be signing several of her books of photographs following the session.

Another highlight of the Convention Opening General Session will be the awarding of the 2015 ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year, chosen from the five regional finalists. Who will represent the language education community in 2015? Find out at this exciting event!



Sessions and Plenaries

At the 2014 convention, you can choose from more than 600 sessions in a variety of formats covering a wide spectrum of the language profession. Available educational opportunities include the ACTFL plenary sessions, roundtables, electronic posters, and exhibitor workshops. You can find out all about these and more by accessing the ACTFL Online Program at www.actfl.org/conventionexpo.

World Languages Expo

While at the convention, you must visit the 2014 World Languages Expo with more than 250 exhibiting companies showcasing the latest products and services for you and your students. This is a one-of-a-kind experience with the most companies and organizations relating to language learning in one place that you can imagine.

How to Register

It's easy to register for the ACTFL Convention in advance. Simply go online to www.actfl.org/convention-expo/registration to access the registration form. Registrations may be submitted online—or by phone, fax, or mail. To register by phone, call (508) 743-8561. You can also fax your registration form to (508) 743-9626 or mail it to ACTFL c/o Convention Data Services (CDS), 107 Waterhouse Road, Bourne, MA 02532. All registration forms must be post-marked by, faxed on or before, or submitted online by midnight on **October 29**. Please note

that badges will not be mailed. You will need to bring your email confirmation and print your badge onsite. If you do not register by the deadline, you will need to register late/onsite in San Antonio.

Where to Stay

ACTFL has arranged special rates with a number of excellent hotels in San Antonio. Be sure to register by the **October 27** housing deadline! Find all the details you need online at www.actfl.org/convention-expo/housing.

Full Convention Registration

Registration Category	Advance	Onsite
	by 10/29/14	after 10/29/14
Member	\$215	\$310
Non-member	\$315	\$410
ACTFL student member	\$115	\$135
ACTFL retired member	\$145	\$165

Daily Registration

for Friday, Saturday, Sunday

One day member	\$175	\$270
One day non-member	\$260	\$355

CHECK OUT THE *Pre-Convention Workshops*

Join us on Thursday, November 20, 2014
for pre-convention workshops. Participate in
either a full day or half day of intensive training
on these cutting-edge topics.



Each year on the day prior to the opening of the ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo, several excellent pre-convention workshops are offered for those looking to experience an unparalleled professional development experience.

Once again in 2014, these workshops address the latest and most important issues, methods, and ideas in language education today.

Register by
October 29
and pay only
\$150 each for a
full-day
workshop!

The FULL-DAY Workshops being offered are:

The Keys to Enhancing Student Learning Through Instructional Strategies: A Spotlight on Learning and Teaching

*This workshop builds on a forthcoming ACTFL
publication by Leslie Grahn and Dave McAlpine*

The Keys to Planning for Learning: Designing Effective Unit and Lesson Plans to Meet Proficiency Goals

*This workshop is based on the ACTFL publication, The Keys to
Planning for Learning: Effective Curriculum, Unit and Lesson
Design by Donna Clementi and Laura Terrill*

Enhancing Instruction with Integrated Performance Assessment

*The authors of the ACTFL publication, Implementing Integrated
Performance Assessment, present an overview of Integrated
Performance Assessment (IPA) at the Novice, Intermediate, and
Advanced levels*

Other topics include:

Languages for All: Planning for Differentiation

Developing Language Performance in the Classroom:
Novice to Intermediate

Developing Language Performance in the Classroom:
Intermediate to Advanced

Developing Global Competence:

Integrating Culture and Language Development

Advanced Placement (AP) Workshops in:

- Chinese Language and Culture
- French Language and Culture
- French Language and Culture
- Italian Language and Culture
- Japanese Language and Culture
- Latin
- Spanish Language and Culture
- Spanish Literature and Culture

Half-day
workshops
are only \$90
if you register by
October 29!

The HALF-DAY Workshops being offered are:

Designing a Path for Student Success Guiding Language Learning with Formative Assessment

Collaboratively Implementing edTPA into World Language Teacher
Education Programs

The Power of Collaboration in 21st Century Postsecondary
Departments

Mapping our Way: Designing a Learning Plan Based on
the Standards

Individualize Language Learning with Culture-Based Stations

Don't Miss the Convention Plenary Sessions

Friday, November 21 • 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Reframing World Language Learning Within Global Competence Models

Ruta Couet, World Language Specialist, South Carolina Department of Education
Helga Fasciano, Special Assistant for Global Education, North Carolina Department of
Public Instruction

Jacque Van Houten, World Language Specialist for Jefferson County Public Schools, Louisville KY

Saturday, November 22 • 10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.

Research Priorities—Phase II: Using Research to Move Language Education Forward

Eileen Glisan (Chair), Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Erin Kearney, State University of New York at Buffalo
Heather J. Hendry, University of Pittsburgh
Mark A. Darhower, North Carolina State University

Saturday, November 22 • 2:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

Framing Language Learning within the International Context of Global Competence: What Does It Take to Prepare Our Students for International Engagement?

Christine Brown, Department of State (Moderator)
Charles Miller, Associate Professor, Learning Technologies, Director, LT Media Lab, College of
Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota
Additional representatives from business and government

Come to San Antonio a day early and enhance your ACTFL
Convention experience with a pre-convention workshop!

***Learn more and register online at
www.actfl.org/conventionexpo.***

“OUR STUDENTS LOOK FORWARD TO THEIR TIME IN THE LAB. ONE OF THE GREAT FEATURES OF THE SONY LAB IS THE ABILITY FOR EACH STUDENT TO ADJUST THE SPEED OF A RECORDING TO SUIT THEIR PERSONAL COMPREHENSION LEVEL. THIS REDUCES ANY FEAR WHEN TACKLING AN AUDITORY FILE, GIVING THEM THE EXTRA BOOST IN CONFIDENCE AND A SENSE OF CONTROL IN THEIR INDIVIDUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.”

Engage today's digital learners with language lab technology integrated into a smart curriculum.

Provide flexible technology tools that enable paced activities to meet the needs of each individual learner.

Increase productivity and real-world communication in the target language.

One of many language educators motivating students with our progressive interactive technology.

Kathy Jany, Head World Languages
Crystal Springs Uplands School



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